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THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

EDITED

BY THOMAS RUSSELL, M.A.

WITH

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM ORME.

VOL. XIX.

CONTAINING

THE DUTY OF PASTORS AND PEOPLE DISTINGUISHED:
ESHCOL; A CLUSTER OF FRUIT OF CANAAN:
TREATISES ON SCHISM:
QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE POWER OF THE SUPREME MAGISTRATE
ABOUT RELIGION, PROPOSED AND RESOLVED:
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AND A VINDICATION OF THE
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THE

DUTY OF PASTORS AND PEOPLE

DISTINGUISHED:

OR,

A BRIEF DISCOURSE,

TOUCHING THE

ADMINISTRATION OF THINGS COMMANDED IN RELIGION;

ESPECIALLY CONCERNING THE MEANS TO BE USED
BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD
(DISTINCT FROM CHURCH OFFICERS) FOR THE INCREASING OF DIVINE
KNOWLEDGE IN THEMSELVES AND OTHERS:

WHEREIN

BOUNDS ARE PRESCRIBED TO THEIR PERFORMANCES;

THEIR LIBERTY IS ENLARGED TO THE
UTMOST EXTENT OF THE DICTATES OF NATURE AND RULES OF CHARITY;
THEIR DUTY LAID DOWN
IN DIRECTIONS DRAWN FROM SCRIPTURE PRECEPTS, AND
THE PRACTICE OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN ALL AGES.

TOGETHER WITH

THE SEVERAL WAYS OF EXTRAORDINARY CALLING TO THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC TEACHING,

WITH WHAT ASSURANCE SUCH TEACHERS MAY HAVE OF THEIR
CALLING, AND WHAT EVIDENCE THEY CAN GIVE OF IT
UNTO OTHERS.

I HAVE perused this discourse touching 'The Administration of things commanded in Religion,' and conceive it written with much clearness of judgment, and moderation of spirit, and therefore do approve of it to be published in print.

JOSEPH CARYL.

May 11, 1644.

TO THE

TRULY NOBLE AND MY EVER HONOURED FRIEND,

SIR EDWARD SCOT,

OF SCOT'S HALL IN KENT,

KNIGHT OF THE HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH.

SIR,

HAVING of late been deprived of the happiness to see you, I make bold to send to visit you; and because that the times are troublesome, I have made choice of this messenger: who, having obtained a license to pass, fears no searching. He brings no news, at least to you, but that which was from the beginning, and must continue unto the end, which you have heard, and which (for some part thereof) you have practised out of the word of God. He hath no secret messages prejudicial to the state of church or commonwealth; neither, I hope, will he entertain any such comments by the way, considering from whom he comes, and to whom he goes; of whom, the one would disclaim him, and the other punish him. Ambitious I am not of any entertainment for these few sheets, neither care much what success they find in their travel; setting them out merely in my own defence, to be freed from the continued solicitations of some honest, judicious men, who were acquainted with their contents: being nothing but an hour's country discourse, resolved, from the ordinary pulpit method, into its own principles. When I first thought of sending it to you, I made full account to use

the benefit of the advantage, in recounting of, and returning thanks for, some of those many undeserved favours which I have received from you. But addressing myself to the performance, I fainted in the very entrance; finding their score so large, that I know not where to begin, neither should I know how to end: only one I cannot suffer to lie hid in the crowd, though other engagements hindered me from embracing it, viz. your free proffer of an ecclesiastical preferment, then vacant, and in your donation. Yet truly all received courtesies, have no power to oblige me unto you, in comparison of that abundant worth, which by experience I have found to be dwelling in you. Twice by God's providence have I been with you, when your county hath been in great danger to be ruined; once by the horrid insurrection of a rude godless multitude, and again by the invasion of a potent enemy, prevailing in the neighbour county; at both which times, besides the general calamity justly feared, particular threatenings were daily brought unto you: under which sad dispensations, I must crave leave to say (only to put you in mind of yourself, if it should please God again to reduce you to the like straits), that I never saw more resolved constancy, more cheerful unmoved Christian courage in any man. Such a valiant heart in a weak body, such a directing head, where the hand was but feeble, such unwearied endeavours under the pressures of a painful infirmity, so well advised resolves in the midst of imminent danger, did I then behold, as I know not where to parallel. Neither can I say less in her kind of your virtuous lady, whose known goodness to all, and particular indulgences to me, make her, as she is in herself, very precious in my thoughts and remembrance: whom having named, I desire to take the advantage thankfully to mention her worthy son, my *noble and very* dear friend C. Westrow, whose judg-

ment to discern the differences of these times, and his valour in prosecuting what he is resolved to be just and lawful, places him among the number of those very few, to whom it is given to know aright the causes of things, and vigorously to execute holy and laudable designs. But farther of him I choose to say nothing, because, if I would, I cannot but say too little. Neither will I longer detain you from the ensuing discourse, which I desire to commend to your favourable acceptance, and with my hearty prayers, that the Lord would meet you and yours in all those ways of mercy and grace, which are necessary to carry you along through all your engagements, until you arrive at the haven of everlasting glory, where you would be. I rest

Your most obliged servant

In Jesus Christ our common Master,

JOHN OWEN.

PREFACE.

THE glass of our lives seems to run and keep pace with the extremity of time: the end of those 'ends of the world'[a] which began with the gospel is doubtless coming upon us; he that was instructed what should be till time should be no more,[b] said it was ἐσχάτη ὥρα,[c] the last hour in his time: much sand cannot be behind, and Christ shakes the glass; many minutes of that hour cannot remain: the next measure we are to expect, is but 'a moment, the twinkling of an eye, wherein we shall all be changed.'[d] Now as if the horoscope of the decaying age had some secret influence into the wills of men, to comply with the decrepit world, they generally delight to run into extremes; not that I would have the fate of the times to bear the faults of men,[e] like him who cried, οὐκ ἐγὼ αἴτιος εἰμὶ ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς καὶ μοῖρα, to free himself, entitling God and fate to his sins; but only to shew how the all-disposing providence of the Most High, works such a compliance of times and persons, as may jointly drive at his glorious aims, causing men to set out in such seasons as are fittest for their travel. This epidemical disease of the aged world, is the cause, why in that great diversity of contrary opinions, wherewith men's heads and hearts are now replenished, the truth pretended to be sought with so much earnestness, may be often gathered up, quite neg-

[a] 1 Cor. x. 11. τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων. [b] Rev. x. 6.
[c] 1 John ii. 18. Matt. xxiv. 33.
[d] 1 Cor. xv. 52. Zanch. de fine sec. Mol. acc. proph. [e] Rom. ix. 19.

lected, between the parties litigant: 'medio tutissimus' is a sure rule, but that fiery spirits,

> Pyroeis, Eous, et Æthon,
> —— Quartusque Phlegon,

will be mounting. In the matter concerning which I propose my weak essay, some would have all Christians to be almost ministers; others, none but ministers to be God's clergy: those would give the people the keys, these use them, to lock them out of the church; the one ascribing to them primarily all ecclesiastical power for the ruling of the congregation, the other abridging them of the performance of spiritual duties, for the building of their own souls as though there were no habitable earth between the valley (I had almost said the pit) of democratical confusion, and the precipitous rock of hierarchical tyranny. When unskilful archers shoot, the safest place to avoid the arrow is the white: going as near as God shall direct me to the truth of this matter, I hope to avoid the strokes of the combatants on every side. And therefore will not handle it ἐριστικῶς, with opposition to any man, or opinion, but δογματικῶς briefly proposing mine own required judgment; the summary result whereof, is, that the sacred calling may retain its ancient diguity, though the people of God be not deprived of their Christian liberty; to clear which proposal, some things I shall briefly premise.

THE

DUTY OF PASTORS AND PEOPLE

DISTINGUISHED.

CHAP. I.

Of the administration of holy things among the patriarchs before the law.

1. CONCERNING the ancient patriarchs: from these, some who would have Judaism to be but an intercision of Christianity,[f] derive the pedigree of Christians, affirming the difference between us and them to be solely in the name and not the thing itself: of this, thus much at least is true, that 'the law of commandments contained in ordinances,'[g] did much more diversify the administration of the covenant, before and after Christ, than those plain moralities, wherewith in their days it was clothed: where the assertion is deficient, antiquity hath given its authors sanctuary from farther pursuit; their practice then, were it clear, can be no precedent for Christians. All light brought to the gospel, in comparison of those full and glorious beams that shine in itself, is but a candle set up in the sun: yet, for their sakes who found out the former unity, I will (not following the conceit of any, nor the comments of many) give you such a bare narration, as the Scripture will supply me withal, of their administration of the holy things and practice of their religion (as it seems Christianity, though not so called), and doubt you not of divine approbation and institution. For all prelacy, at least until Nimrod hunted for preferment, was 'de jure divino.' I find then, that before the giving of the law, the chief men among the servants of the true God, did every one in their own families, with their neighbours adjoining of the same persuasion, perform those things which they knew to be required by the law of nature, tradition, or spe-

[f] Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 1. cap. Ambr. de Sacra. lib. 4. [g] Eph. ii. 15.

cial revelation (the unwritten word of those times) in the service of God, instructing their children and servants in the knowledge of their creed concerning the nature and goodness of God, the fall and sin of man, the use of sacrifices, and the promised seed (the sum of their religion); and moreover, performing τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν things appertaining unto God. This we have delivered concerning Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Jethro, Job, and others.[h] Now whether they did this as any way peculiarly designed unto it, as an office, or rather in obedient duty to the prime law of nature, in which, and to whose performance, many of them were instructed and encouraged by divine revelation (as seems most probable), is not necessary to be insisted on. To me truly it seems evident, that there were no determinate ministers of divine worship before the law; for where find we any such office instituted, where the duties of those officers prescribed? or were they of human invention?[i] God would never allow, that in any regard, the will of the creature should be the measure of his honour and worship: but the right and exercise of the priesthood, say some, was in the first-born; but a proof of this will be for ever wanting. Abel was not Adam's eldest son, yet, if any thing were peculiar to such an office, it was by him performed; that both the brothers carried their sacrifices to their father, is a vain surmise.[k] Who was priest then when Adam died? Neither can any order of descent be handsomely contrived. Noah had three sons, grant the eldest only a priest; were the eldest sons of his other sons priests or no? if not, how many men, fearing God, were scattered over the face of the earth, utterly deprived of the means of right worship? if so, there must be a new rule produced beyond the prescript of nature, whereby a man may be enabled by generation to convey that to others which he hath not in himself. I speak not of Melchisedec and his extraordinary priesthood: why should any speak where the Holy Ghost is silent? If we pretend to know him, we overthrow the whole mystery, and run cross to the apostle, affirming him to be ἀπάτορα ἀμήτορα, without father, mother, or genealogy; for so long time, then, as the

[h] Gen. iv. 26. v. 22. vi. 8, 9. &c. viii. 20. ix. 25—27. xviii. 18, 19. xix. 9. xxviii. 1, 2. xxiv. 26. xxxv. 3—5. Exod. iii. 1. Job i. 5. xlii. 8—10.

[i] Tho. 22. æ. q. 87. ad 3. [k] Jacob Armin. de Sacerd. ch. orat.

greatest combination of men was in distinct families (which sometimes were very great[l]), politics and economics being of the same extent, all the way of instruction in the service and knowledge of God, was by the way of paternal admonition; for the discharge of which duty, Abraham is commended, Gen. xviii. 19. whereunto the instructors had no particular engagement, but only the general obligation of the law of nature; what rule they had for their performances towards God, doth not appear; all positive law, in every kind, is ordained for the good of community; that then being not, no such rule was assigned until God gathered a people, and lifted up the standard of circumcision for his subjects to repair unto: the world in the days of Abraham beginning generally to incline to idolatry and polytheism,[m] the first evident irreconcilable division was made between his people and the malignants, which before lay hid in his decree: visible signs and prescript rules were necessary for such a gathered church. This before I conceive to have been supplied by special revelation.

The law of nature a long time prevailed for the worship of the one true God. The manner of this worship, the generality had at first (as may be conceived) from the vocal instruction of Adam, full of the knowledge of divine things; this afterward their children had from them by tradition, helped forward by such who received particular revelations in their generation, such as Noah, thence called a 'preacher of righteousness:' so knowledge of God's will increased,[n] until sin quite prevailed, and all flesh corrupted their ways; all apostacy for the most part begins in the will, which is more bruised by the fall than the understanding. Nature is more corrupted in respect of the desire of good, than the knowledge of truth; the knowledge of God would have flourished longer in men's minds, had not sin banished the love of God out of their hearts. The sum is, that before the giving of the law, every one in his own person served God according to that knowledge he had of his will. Public performances were assigned to none, farther than the obligation of the law of nature to their duty in their own

[l] Gen. xiv. 14.

[m] Eccles. malignantium. August. con. Faust. lib. 19. cap. 11.

[n] Per incrementa temporum crevit divinæ cognitiones incrementum. Greg. Hom. 16. in Ezek. a med.

families. I have purposely omitted to speak of Melchisedec, as I said before, having spoken all that I can or dare concerning him, on another occasion. Only this I will add, they who so confidently affirm him to be Shem, the son of Noah, and to have his priesthood in an ordinary way, by virtue of his primogeniture, might have done well to ask leave of the Holy Ghost, for the revealing of that which he purposely concealed, to set forth no small mystery, by them quite overthrown. And he who of late makes him look upon Abraham and the four kings, all of his posterity, fighting for the inheritance of Canaan (of which cause of their quarrel the Scripture is silent), robs him at least of one of his titles, a 'king of peace;' making him neither king nor peaceable, but a bloody grandsire, that either could not, or would not part his fighting children, contending for that whose right was in him, to bestow on whom he would. And thus was it with them in the administration of sacred things: There was no divine determination of the priestly office on any order of men: when things appertaining unto God, were to be performed in the name of a whole family, (as afterward, 1 Sam. xx. 6.) perhaps the honour of the performance was by consent given to the first-born. Farther, the way of teaching others, was by paternal admonition; (so Gen. xviii. 19.) motives thereunto, and rules of their proceeding therein, being the law of nature, and special revelation. Prescription of positive law, ordained for the good of community, could have no place, when all society was domestical. To instruct others (upon occasion) wanting instruction for their good, is an undeniable dictate of the first principles of nature; obedience to which was all the ordinary warrant they had for preaching to any beyond their own families, observed by Lot, Gen. xix. 7. though his sermon contained a little false doctrine, ver. 8. Again, special revelation leaves as a great impression on the mind of him to whom it is made, so an effectual obligation for the performance of what it directeth unto, 'the lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' Amos iii. 8. And this was Noah's warrant for those performances, from whence he was called 'a preacher of righteousness;' 2 Pet. ii. 5. Thus although I do not find any determinate order of priesthood by divine institution, yet do I not thence con-

clude with Aquin. 12. æ. quest. 3. a. 1. (if I noted right at the reading of it) that all the worship of God, I mean, for the manner of it, was of human invention, yea, sacrifices themselves; for this will worship, as I shewed before, God always rejected. No doubt but sacrifices and the manner of them were of divine institution, albeit their particular original, in regard of precept, though not of practice, be to us unknown; for what in all this concerns us, we may observe that a superinstitution of a new ordinance, doth not overthrow any thing that went before in the same kind, universally moral or extraordinary; nor at all change it, unless by express exception, as by the introduction of the ceremonial law, the offering of sacrifices, which before was common to all, was restrained to the posterity of Levi. Look then what performances in the service of God that primitive household of faith was in the general directed unto by the law of nature, the same, regulated by gospel light (not particularly excepted), ought the generality ofC hristians to perform, which what they were may be collected from what was forespoken.

CHAP. II.

Of the same among the Jews, and of the duty of that people distinct from their church officers.

2. CONCERNING the Jews after the giving of Moses's law: the people of God were then gathered in one, and a standard was set up for all his to repair unto, and the church of God became like a city upon a hill, conspicuous to all; and a certain rule set down for every one to observe that would approach unto him. As then before the law we sought for the manner of God's worship from the practice of men, so now since the change of the external administration of the covenant, from the prescription of God; then we guessed at what was commanded, by what was done; now, at what was done, by what was commanded: and this is all the certainty we can have in either kind, though the consequence from the *precept, to the performance*; and on the contrary, in

this corrupted state of nature, be not of absolute necessity; only the difference is, where things are obscured, it is a safer way to prove the practice of men by God's precept, charitably supposing them to have been obedient, than to wrest the divine rule to their observation, knowing how prone men are to deify themselves, by mixing their inventions with the worship of God. The administration of God's providence towards his church hath been various, and the communication of himself unto it, at sundry times, hath been in divers manners; especially, it pleased him not to bring it to perfection but by degrees, as 'the earth bringeth forth fruit; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.'[a] Thus the church, before the giving of Moses's law, seems to have had two main defects, which the Lord at that time supplied; one in discipline or government, in that every family exercised the public worship of God within itself or apart, (though some do otherwise conclude from Gen. iv. 26.) which was first removed, by establishing a consistory of elders; the other in the doctrine, wanting the rule of the written word, being directed by tradition, the manifold defects whereof were made up by special revelation; to neither of these defects was the church since exposed. Whether there was any thing written before the giving of the law, is not worth contending about: Austin[b] thought Enoch's prophecy was written by him; and Josephus affirms,[c] that there were two pillars erected, one of stone, the other of brick, before the flood, wherein divers things were engraven; and Sixtus Senensis,[d] that the book of the wars of the Lord was a volume ancienter than the books of Moses; but the contrary opinion is most received: so Chrysost. Hom. 1. in Mali. After its giving, none ever doubted of the perfection of the written word for the end to which it was ordained, until the Jews had broached their Talmud to oppose Christ, and the Papists their traditions, to advance antichrist; doubtless the sole aim of the work, whatever were the intentions of the workmen.

The lights which God maketh, are sufficient to rule the seasons for which they are ordained; as, in creating of the

[a] Mark iv. 28.
[b] Aug. de Civit. Dei. lib. 15. cap. 23. [c] Joseph. Antiq. lib. 1. cap. 3.
[d] Sixt. Senens. Bib. lib. 2.

world, God 'made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night;' so in the erection of the new world of his church, he set up two great lights, the lesser light of the Old Testament, to guide the night, the dark space of time under the law, and the greater light of the New Testament, to rule the glorious day of the gospel; and these two lights do sufficiently enlighten every man that cometh into this new world. There is no need of the false fire of tradition, where God sets up such glorious lights. This be premised, for the proneness of men to deflect from the golden rule and heavenly polestar in the investigation of the truth; especially in things of this nature, concerning which we treat, wherein ordinary endeavours are far greater in searching after what men have done, than what they ought to have done; and when the fact is once evidenced, from the pen of a rabbi, or a father, presently conclude the right; amongst many, we may take a late treatise for instance, entitled, Of Religious Assemblies and the Public Service of God; whose author would prescribe the manner of God's worship among Christians, from the custom of the Jews; and their observations, he would prove from the rabbies; not at all taking notice, that from such observance, they were long ago recalled to the 'law and to the testimony;'[e] and afterward for them sharply rebuked by truth itself. Doubtless it is a worthy knowledge to be able, and a commendable diligence, to search into those coiners of curiosities; but to embrace the fancies of those wild heads which have nothing but novelty to commend them, and to seek their imposition on others, is but an abusing of their own seisure and others' industry. The issue of such a temper seems to be the greatest part of that treatise, which because I wait only for some spare hours to demonstrate in a particular tract, I shall for the present omit the handling of divers things there spoken of, though otherwise they might very opportunely here be mentioned; as the office and duty of prophets, the manner of God's worship in their synagogues, the original and institution of their latter teachers, scribes and Pharisees, &c. and briefly only observe those things, which are most immediately conducing to my proposed subject. The worship

[e] Matt. v. 6.

of God among them was either moral, or ceremonial and typical; the performances belonging unto the latter, with all things thereunto conducing, were appropriated to them whom God had peculiarly set apart for that purpose. By ceremonial worship, I understand all sacrifices and offerings, the whole service of the tabernacle, and afterward of the temple: all which were typical, and established merely for the present dispensation, not without purpose of their abrogation, when that which was to be more perfect should appear. Now the several officers, with their distinct employments in and about this service, were so punctually prescribed and limited by Almighty God, that as none of them might, ἀλλοτριοπικοπεῖν without presumptuous impiety, intrude into the function of others, not allotted to them, as Numb. xvi. 7—10. so none of their brethren might presume to intrude into the least part of their office, without manifest sacrilege; Josh. xxii. 11, 12. True it is, that there is mention of divers in the Scripture that offered sacrifices, or vowed so to do, who were strangers from the priest's office, yea, from the tribe of Levi, as Jephthah, Judges xi. Manoah, chap. xiii. David, 2 Sam. vi. and again, 2 Sam. xxiv. Solomon, 1 Kings iii. and again, chap. ix. But following our former rule of interpreting the practice by the precept, we may find, and that truly, that all the expressions of their offerings signify no more, but they brought those things to be offered, and caused the priests to do, what in their own persons they ought not to perform. Now hence by the way we may observe, that the people of God, under the New Testament, contrary distinct from their teachers, have a greater interest in the performance of spiritual duties belonging to the worship of God, and more in that regard is granted unto them, and required of them, than was of the ancient people of the Jews, considered as distinguished from their priests, because their duty is prescribed unto them under the notion of those things, which then were appropriate only to the priests; as of offering incense, sacrifice, oblations, and the like, which in their original institution were never permitted to the people of the Jews, but yet tralatitiously and by analogy are enjoined to all Christians: but of these afterward. The main question is, about the duty of the people of God, in per-

formances for their own edification, and the extent of their lawful undertakings for others' instruction; for the first, which is of nearest concernment unto themselves, the sum of their duty in this kind may be reduced to these two heads: First, To hear the word and law of God read attively, especially when it was expounded. Secondly, To meditate therein themselves, to study it by day and night, and to get their senses exercised in that rule of their duty. Concerning each of which, we have both the precept and the practice, God's command, and their performance. The one, in that injunction given unto the priest, Deut. xxxi. 11—13. 'When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place that he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God; and that their children which have not known, may hear and learn.' All which we find punctually performed on both sides; Nehem. viii. 2—5. Ezra the priest standing on a pulpit of wood, read the law, and gave the meaning of it, and the 'ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.' Which course continued until there was an end put to the observances of that law; as Acts xv. 21. 'Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.' On which ground, not receding from their ancient observations, the people assembled to hear our Saviour teaching with authority; Luke xxi. 38. And St. Paul divers times took advantage of their ordinary assemblies to preach the gospel unto them. For the other, which concerns their own searching into the law, and studying of the word, we have a strict command, Deut. vi. 6—9. 'And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of *thy house* and upon thy gates.' Which *strict charge is again repeated,* chap. xi. 18. summarily

comprehending all ways whereby they might become exercised in the law. Now because this charge is in particular given to the king, chap. xvii. 18, 19. the performance of a king in obedience thereunto, will give us light enough into the practice of the people. And this we have in that most excellent psalm of David, viz. cxix. which for the most part is spent in petitions for light, direction, and assistance in that study, in expressions of the performance of this duty, and in spiritual glorying of his success in his divine meditations: especially, ver. 99. he ascribeth his proficiency in heavenly wisdom and understanding above his teachers, not to any special revelation, not to that prophetical light wherewith he was endued (which indeed consisting in a transient irradiation of the mind, being a supernatural impulsion commensurate to such things as are connatural only unto God, doth of itself give neither wisdom nor understanding), but unto his study in the testimonies of God. The blessings pronounced upon, and promises annexed to, the performance of this duty, concern not the matter in hand; only from the words wherein the former command is delivered, two things may be observed: 1. That the paternal teaching and instruction of families in things which appertain to God, being a duty of the law of nature, remained in its full vigour, and was not at all impaired by the institution of a new order of teachers for assemblies, beyond domestical then established. Neither without doubt ought it to cease amongst Christians, there being no other reason why now it should, but that, which then was not effectual.

Secondly, That the people of God were not only permitted, but enjoined also, to read the Scriptures, and upon all occasions, in their own houses and elsewhere, to talk of them, or communicate their knowledge in them, unto others. There had been then no council at Trent to forbid the one, nor perhaps was there any strict canon to bring the other within the compass of a conventicle. But now for the solemn public teaching and instructing of others it was otherwise ordained, for this was committed to them in regard of ordinary performance, who were set apart by God; as for others before named: so also for that purpose, the author of the treatise I before mentioned, concludeth that *the people were* not taught at the public assemblies by

priests, as such; that is, teaching the people was no part of their office or duty; but on the contrary, that seems to be a man's duty in the service or worship of God, which God requires of him, and that appertain to his office whose performance is expressly enjoined unto him as such; and for whose neglect, he is rebuked or punished. Now all this we find concerning the priest's public teaching of the people; for the proof of which the recital of a few pertinent places shall suffice: Lev. x. 11. we have an injunction laid upon Aaron and his sons, 'to teach the children of Israel all the statutes that the Lord had spoken to them by the hand of Moses.' And of the Levites it is affirmed, Deut. xxxiii. 10. 'They shall teach Jacob thy statutes, and Israel thy law.' Now though some restrain these places to the discerning of leprosies, and between holy and unholy, with their determination of difficulty emergent out of the law, yet this no way impairs the truth of that I intend to prove by them; for even those things belonged to that kind of public teaching which was necessary under that administration of the covenant; but instead of many, I will name one not liable to exception; Mal. ii. 7. 'The priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts:' where both a recital of his own duty, that he should be full of knowledge to instruct; the intimation of the people, that they should seek unto him, or give heed to his teaching; with the reason of them both, 'for he is the Lord's messenger' (one of the highest titles of the ministers of the gospel performing the same office); do abundantly confirm, that instructing of the people in the moral worship of God, was a duty of the priestly office, or of the priests as such; especially considering the effect of this teaching mentioned, ver. 9. 'the turning of many from their iniquity;' the proper end of teaching in assemblies: all which we find exactly performed by an excellent priest, preaching to the people on a pulpit of wood; Nehem. viii. 5—8. Farther, for a neglect of this, the priests are threatened with the rejection from their office; Hosea iv. 6. Now it doth not seem justice, that a man should be put out of his office for a neglect of that, whose performance doth not *belong unto it; the* fault of every neglect, *ariseth from the description of* a duty. Until something then

of more force, than any thing as yet I have seen, be objected to the contrary, we may take it for granted, That the teaching of the people under the law, in public assemblies, was performed ordinarily by the priests, as belonging to their duty and office. Men endued with gifts supernatural, extraordinarily called, and immediately sent by God himself for the instruction of his people, the reformation of his church, and foretelling things to come, such as were the prophets, who, whenever they met with opposition, staid themselves upon their extraordinary calling, come not within the compass of my disquisition. The institution also of the schools of the prophets, the employment of the sons of the prophets, the original of the scribes, and those other possessors of Moses's chair in our Saviour's time, wherein he conversed here below, being necessarily to be handled in my observations on the forenamed treatise, I shall omit until more leisure and an enjoyment of the small remainder of my poor library shall better enable me. For the present, because treating in 'causa facili,' although writing without books, I hope I am not besides the truth; the book of truth, praised be God, is easy to be obtained, and God is not tied to means in discovering the truth of that book. Come we then to the consideration of what duty in the service of God, beyond those belonging unto several families, were permitted to any of the people, not peculiarly set apart for such a purpose. The ceremonial part of God's worship, as we saw before, was so appropriate to the priests, that God usually revenged the transgression of that ordinance very severely: the examples of Uzzah and Uzziah[f] are dreadful testimonies of his wrath in that kind. It was an unalterable law, by virtue whereof the priests excommunicated[g] that presumptuous king. For that which we chiefly intend, the public teaching of others, as to some it was enjoined, as an act of their duty, so it might at first seem that it was permitted to all, who having ability thereunto, were called by charity or necessity. So the princes of Jehoshaphat taught the people out of the law of God, as well as the priests and Levites; 2 Chron. xvii. 7—10. so also Nehemiah, and others of the chiefs of the people are reckoned among them who taught the people; Nehem. viii. and afterward, when St. Paul at any

[f] *2 Chron.* xxvi. 19 [g] 'Cast him out;' John ix. 34.

time entered into their synagogues, they never questioned any thing but his abilities; if he had any word of exhortation to the people he might 'say on:'[h] and the scribes, questioning the authority of our Saviour for his teaching, were moved to it, not because he taught, but because he taught so, and such things, with authority, and against their traditions; otherwise they rather troubled themselves, to think how he should become able to teach, Mark vi. 2, 3. than him, because he did. There are indeed many sharp reproofs in the Old Testament of those who undertook to be God's messengers without his warrant; as Jer. xxii. 21, 22. 'I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel,' &c. to which, and the like places it may satisfactorily be answered, that howsoever by the way of analogy, they may be drawn into rule for these times of the gospel, yet they were spoken only in reference to them who falsely pretended to extraordinary revelations, and a power of foretelling things to come; whom the Lord forewarned his people of, and appointed punishments for them, Deut. xiii. with which sort of pretenders that nation was ever replenished, for which the very heathen often derided them. He who makes it his employment to counterfeit God's dispensations, had then no more glorious work to imitate than that of prophecy, wherein he was not idle; yet notwithstanding all this, I do not conceive the former discourse to be punctually true in the latitude thereof; as though it were permitted to all men, or any men, besides the priests and prophets to teach publicly at all times, and in all estates of that church. Only I conceive that the usual answers given to the forecited places, when objected, are not sufficient: take an instance in one, 2 Chron. xvii. of the princes of Jehoshaphat teaching with the priests. The author of the book before intimated, conceives that neither priests nor princes taught at all in that way we now treat of; but only that the priests rode circuit to administer judgment, and had the princes with them to do execution: but this interpretation he borroweth only to confirm his πρῶτον ψευδος, that priests did not teach as such; the very circumstance of the place enforces a contrary sense; and in chap. xix.

[h] *Acts xiii. 15.*

there is express mention of appointing judges for the determination of civil causes in every city, which evidently was a distinct work, distinguished from that mentioned in this place; and upon the like ground I conceive it to be no intimation of a moveable sanhedrim, which although of such a mixed constitution, yet was not itinerant, and is mentioned in that other place: neither is that other ordinary gloss more probable, they were sent to teach, that is to countenance the teaching of the law; a duty which seldom implores the assistance of human countenance: and if for the present it did, the king's authority commanding it was of more value than the presence of the princes. Besides, there is nothing in the text, nor the circumstances thereof, which should hold out this sense unto us; neither do we find any other rule, precept, or practice, whose analogy might lead us to such an interpretation. That which to me seems to come nearest the truth is, that they taught also, not in a ministerial way, like the priests and Levites, but imperially and judicially declaring the sense of the law, the offences against it, and the punishments due to such offences, especially inasmuch as they had reference to the peace of the commonwealth; which differs not much from that which I rest upon, to wit, that in a collapsed and corrupted state of the church, when the ordinary teachers are either utterly ignorant and cannot, or negligent and will not, perform their duty; gifts in any one to be a teacher, and consent in others by him to be taught, are a sufficient warrant for the performance of it; and than this, the places cited out of the Old Testament prove no more. For the proceedings of St. Paul in the synagogues, their great want of teaching (being a people before forsaken of the Spirit and then withering) might be a warrant for them to desire it, and his apostolical mission for him to do it. It doth not then at all from hence appear, that there was then any liberty of teaching in public assemblies granted unto, or assumed by any in such an estate of the church, as wherein it ought to be: when indeed it is ruinously declining, every one of God's servants hath a sufficient warrant to help or prevent the fall; this latter being but a common duty of zeal and charity, the former an authoritative act of the keys, the minister whereof is only an instrumental agent, that

from whence it hath its efficacy residing in another, in whose stead, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. and under whose person it is done. Now whoever doth any thing in another's stead, not by express patent from him, is a plain impostor; and a grant of this nature made unto all in general doth not appear. I am bold to speak of these things under the notion of the keys, though in the time of the law; for I cannot assent to those schoolmen,[i] who will not allow that the keys in any sense were granted to the legal priests; their power of teaching, discerning, judging, receiving in, and casting out, import the thing, though the name (no more than that of 'regnum cœlorum,' as Jerome and Augustine observe), be not to be found in the Old Testament: and doubtless God ratified the execution of his own ordinances in heaven, then, as well as now. What the immediate effect of their services was, how far by their own force they reached, and what they typified, how in signification only, and not immediately they extended to an admission into, and exclusion from the heavenly tabernacle, and wherein lies the secret power of gospel commissions beyond theirs to attain the ultimate end, I have declared elsewhere.[k]

Thus much of what the ancient people of God distinguished from their priests might not do: now briefly of what they might, or rather of what they ought, and what their obedience and profession declared that they thought themselves obliged unto; private exhortations, rebukings, and such dictates of the law of nature being presupposed; we find them farther 'speaking often one to another,' of those things which concerned the fear and worship of the Lord; Mal. iii. 16. by their lips 'feeding many with wisdom;' Prov. x. 21. discoursing of God's laws upon all occasions; Deut. vi. 6—8. by multitudes encouraging each other to the service of God; Zech. viii. 20, 21. Isa. ii. 3. jointly praising God with cheerful hearts; Psal. xlii. 4. giving and receiving mutual consolation; Psal. lv. 14. and all this, with much more of the same nature, at their meetings, either occasional, or for that purpose indicted. Always provided, that they abstained from fingering the ark, or meddling with those things which were appropriated to the office of the priests: and concerning them hitherto.

[i] *Aquin. Durand.*

[k] *Tractatu de sacerdotio Christi, contra Armin. Socini. et Papistas, nondum edito.*

CHAP. III.

Containing a digression concerning the name of priests, the right of Christians thereunto by their interest in the priesthood of Christ, with the presumption of any particularly appropriating it to themselves.

AND now the transaction of these things in the Christian church presents itself to our consideration; in handling whereof, I shall not at all discourse concerning the several church officers instituted by Christ and his apostles, for the edification of his body; nor concerning the difference between them who were partakers at first of an extraordinary vocation, and those who since have been called to the same work in an ordinary manner, divinely appointed for the direction of the church: neither yet doth that diversity of the administration of government in the churches, then when they were under the plenitude of apostolical power, and now when they follow rules prescribed for their reiglement, come in my way.

Farther, Who are the subject of the keys, in whom all that secondary ecclesiastical power which is committed to men doth reside, after the determinations of so many learned men, by clear Scripture light, shall not by me be called in question: all these, though conducing to the business in hand, would require a large discussion, and such a scholastical handling, as would make it an inconsutilous piece of this popular discourse; my intent being only to shew, that seeing there are, as all acknowledge, some under the New Testament, as well as the Old, peculiarly set apart by God's own appointment for the administration of Christ's ordinances, especially teaching of others by preaching of the gospel, in the way of office and duty, what remaineth for the rest of God's people to do, for their own and others' edification.

But here, before I enter directly upon the matter, I must remove one stone of offence, concerning the common appellation of those who are set apart for the preaching of the gospel: that which is most frequently used for them in the New Testament is διάκονοι, so 1 Cor. iii. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 6. vi. 4. xi. 15. 23. 1 Tim. iv. 6. and in divers other places; to *which add ὑπηρέται,* 1 Cor. iv. 1. a word though of another

original, yet of the same signification with the former, and both rightly translated 'ministers.' The names of ambassadors, stewards, and the like, wherewith they are often honoured are figurative, and given unto them by allusion only: that the former belonged unto them, and were proper for them, none ever denied, but some Rabshakehs of antichrist. Another name there is, which some have assumed unto themselves as an honour, and others have imposed the same upon them for a reproach: viz. that of priest, which to the takers seemed to import a more mysterious employment, a greater advancement above the rest of their brethren, a nearer approach unto God, in the performances of their office, than that of ministers: wherefore they embraced it, either voluntarily alluding to the service of God and the administration thereof, amongst his ancient people the Jews, or thought that they ought necessarily to undergo it, as belonging properly to them who are to celebrate those mysteries and offer those sacrifices which they imagined were to them prescribed. The imposers, on the contrary, pretend divers reasons why now that name can signify none but men rejected from God's work, and given up to superstitious vanities; attending in their minds, the old priests of Baal, and the now shavelings of antichrist: it was a new etymology of this name, which that learned man cleaved unto, who unhappily was engaged into the defence of such errors as he could not but see, and did often confess:[a] to which also he had an entrance made by an archbishop;[b] to wit, that it was but an abbreviation of presbyters; knowing full well, not only that the signification of these words is diverse amongst them to whom belongs 'jus et norma loquendi,' but also, that they are widely different in holy writ. Yea, farther, that those who first dignified themselves with this title, never called themselves presbyters, by way of distinction from the people, but only to have a note of distance among themselves: there being more than one sort of them that were sacrificers, and which 'eo nomine,' accounted themselves priests. Setting aside then all such evasions and distinctions as the people of God are not bound to take notice of, and taking the word in its ordinary acceptation, I shall briefly declare what I conceive of the use thereof, in the respect of them who are ministers

[a] Hook. *Eccles. Polit. lib. 5.* [b] Whitgift, Ans. to the Admon.

of the gospel: which I shall labour to clear by these following observations:

1. All faithful ministers of the gospel, inasmuch as they are ingrafted into Christ, and are true believers, may, as all other true Christians, be called priests; but this inasmuch as they are members of Christ, not ministers of the gospel: it respecteth their persons, not their function, or not them as such. Now I conceive it may give some light to this discourse, if we consider the grounds and reasons of this metaphorical appellation, in divers places of the gospel,[c] ascribed to the worshippers of Christ; and how the analogy which the present dispensation holds with what was established under the administration of the Old Testament may take place: for there we find the Lord thus bespeaking his people: 'Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation;' Exod. xix. 6. so that it should seem that there was then a twofold priesthood: a ritual priesthood, conferred upon the tribe of Levi; and a royal priesthood, belonging to the whole people: the first is quite abrogated and swallowed up in the priesthood of Christ, the other is put over unto us under the gospel, being ascribed to them and us, and every one in covenant with God, not directly and properly, as denoting the function peculiarly so called, but comparatively, with reference had to them that are without; for as those who were properly called priests, had a nearer access unto God than the rest of the people, especially in his solemn worship, so all the people that are in covenant with God, have such an approximation unto him by virtue thereof, in comparison of them that are without, that in respect thereof they are said to be priests. Now the outward covenant made with them who were the children of Abraham after the flesh, was representative of the covenant of grace made with the children of promise, and that whole people typified the hidden elect people of God; so that of both there is the same reason. Thus as 'the priests the sons of Levi' are said to 'come near unto God,' Deut. xxi. 5. and God tells them that 'him whom he hath chosen, he will cause to come near to him;' Numb. xvi. 5. chosen by a particular calling 'ad munus' to the office of the ritual priesthood: so in regard of that other kind, comparatively so called, it is said of the whole people, 'What

[c] Rev. i. 6. v. 10. xx. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5, &c.

nation is there so great that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for;' Deut. iv. 7. Their approaching nigh unto God made them all a nation of priests, in comparison of those dogs and unclean Gentiles that were out of the covenant. Now this prerogative is often appropriate to the faithful in the New Testament: for 'through Christ we have an access by one spirit unto the Lord;' Eph. ii. 18. And chap. iii. 12. 'We have boldness and access with confidence:' so James iv. 8. 'Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you:' which access and approximation unto God seemed, as before was spoken, to be uttered in allusion to the priests of the old law, who had this privilege above others in the public worship, in which respect only things then were typical. Since because we enjoy that prerogative in the truth of the thing itself, which they had only in type, we also are called priests: and as they were said to draw nigh in reference to the rest of the people; so we, in respect of them, who are strangers to the covenant, that now are said to be 'afar off,' Eph. ii. 17. and hereafter shall be without, 'for without are dogs,' &c. Rev. xxii. 15. Thus this metaphorical appellation of priests is in the first place an intimation of that transcendent privilege of grace and favour, which Jesus Christ hath purchased for every one that is sanctified with the blood of the covenant.

(2.) We have an interest in this appellation of priests, by virtue of our union with Christ; being one with our high priest, we also are priests. There is a twofold union between Christ and us: the one, by his taking upon him our nature; the other, by bestowing on us his Spirit: for as in his incarnation he took upon him our flesh and blood by the work of the Spirit, so in our regeneration he bestoweth on us his flesh and blood, by the operation of the same Spirit: yea, so strict is this latter union which we have with Christ, that as the former is truly said to be a union of two natures into one person, so this of many persons into one nature; for by it, we are 'made partakers of the divine nature;' 2 Pet. i. 4. becoming 'members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,' Eph. v. 30. we are so parts of him, of his mystical body, that we and he become thereby as it were one Christ; 'for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members *of that one body being* many, are one body; so is

Christ;' 1 Cor. xii. 12. and the ground of this is, because the same Spirit is in him and us; in him indeed dwelleth the fulness of it, when it is bestowed upon us, only by measure. But yet it is still the same Spirit; and so makes us, according to his own prayer, one with him; as the soul of man being one, makes the whole body with it to be but one man; two men cannot be one, because they have two souls; no more could we be one with Christ, were it not the same Spirit in him and us. Now let a man be never so big or tall, that his feet rest upon the earth, and his head reach to heaven; yet having but one soul, he is still but one man: now though Christ for the present, in respect of our nature assumed, be never so far remote and distant from us in heaven; yet, by the effectual energy and inhabitation of the same Spirit, he is still the head of that one body, whereof we are members, still but one with us. Hence ariseth to us a twofold right to the title of priests.

(1.) Because being in him, and members of him, we are accounted to have done, in him, and with him, whatsoever he hath done for us; 'We are buried with Christ,' Rom. vi. 4. 'dead with him,' ver. 8. 'quickened together with Christ,' Ephes. ii. 5. being raised up, we 'sit together with him in heavenly places,' ver. 6. 'risen with him;' Col. iii. 1. Now all these in Christ were in some sense sacerdotal; wherefore, we having an interest in their performance, by reason of that heavenly participation derived from them unto us, and being united unto him that in them was so properly, are therefore called priests.

(2.) By virtue of this union, there is such an analogy between that which Christ hath done for us as a priest, and what he worketh in us by his Holy Spirit, that those acts of ours come to be called by the same name with his, and we for them to be termed priests. Thus because Christ's death and shedding of his blood, so offering up himself by the eternal Spirit was a true, proper sacrifice for sin, even our spiritual death unto sin is described to be such, both in the nature of it, to be an offering or sacrifice; for 'I beseech you, brethren,' saith St. Paul, 'that you offer up your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,' &c. Rom. xii. 1. and for the manner of it, our 'old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed;' Rom. vi. 6.

(3.) We are priests as we are Christians, or partakers

of a holy unction, whereby we are anointed to the participation of all Christ's glorious offices. We are not called Christians for nothing: if truly we are so, then have we an 'unction from the Holy One, whereby we know all things;' I John. ii. 20. and thus also were all God's people under the old covenant, when God gave that caution concerning them, 'Touch not my Christians, and do my prophets no harm;' Psal. cv. 15. The unction then of the Holy Spirit implies a participation of all those endowments which were typified by the anointing with oil in the Old Testament, and invests us with the privileges, in a spiritual acceptation, of all the sorts of men which then were so anointed; to wit, of kings, priests, and prophets: so that by being made Christians (every one is not so that bears that name), we are ingrafted into Christ, and do attain to a kind of holy and intimate communion with him in all his glorious offices; and in that regard are called priests.

(4.) The sacrifices we are enjoined to offer, give ground to this appellation. Now they are of divers sorts, though all in general eucharistical; as first, of prayers and thanksgivings: Psal. cxvi. 17. 'I will offer unto thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord;' and again, 'Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands be as the evening sacrifice;' Psal. cxli. 2. so Heb. xiii. 15. 'Therefore let us offer unto God the sacrifice of praise;' that is, the fruit of our lips. Secondly, Of good works: Heb. xiii. 16. 'To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' Thirdly, Αυτοθυσιας or self-slaughter, crucifying the old man, killing sin, and offering up our souls and bodies an acceptable sacrifice unto God; Rom. xii. 1. Fourthly, The sweet incense of martyrdom; yea, and 'if I be offered up on the sacrifice and service of your faith;' Phil. ii. 17. Now these and sundry other services acceptable to God, receiving this appellation in the Scripture, denominate the performers of them priests. Now here it must be observed, that these aforenamed holy duties, are called sacrifices, not properly, but metaphorically only, not in regard of the external acts, as were those under the law, but in regard of the internal purity of heart *from whence they* proceed. And because *pure sacrifices, by his own* appointment, were heretofore the

most acceptable service of Almighty God; therefore now, when he would declare himself to be very much delighted with the spiritual acts of our duty, he calls them oblations, incense, sacrifices, offerings, &c. to intimate also a participation with him in his offices, who properly and directly is the only Priest of his church, and by the communication of the virtue of whose sacrifice we are made priests, not having authority in our own names to go unto God for others, but having liberty through him, and in his name, to go unto God for ourselves.

Not to lose myself and reader in this digression, the sum is, the unspeakable blessings which the priesthood of Christ hath obtained for us, are a strong obligation for the duty of praise and thanksgiving, of which that in some measure we may discharge ourselves, he hath furnished us with sacrifices of that kind, to be offered unto God: for our own parts we are poor, and blind, and lame, and naked; neither in the field, nor in the fold, in our hearts, nor among our actions, can we find any thing worth the presenting unto him; wherefore he himself provides them for us, especially for that purpose, sanctifying and consecrating our souls and bodies with the sprinkling of his blood, and the unction of the Holy Spirit. Farther, he hath erected an altar (to sanctify our gifts) in heaven, before the throne of grace, which being spread over with his blood, is consecrated unto God, that the sacrifices of his servants may for ever appear thereon. Add to this, what he also hath added, the eternal and never-expiring fire of the favour of God, which kindleth and consumes the sacrifices laid on that altar: and to the end that all this may be rightly accomplished, he hath consecrated us with his blood, to be kings and priests to God for evermore. So that the close of this discourse will be, that all true believers, by virtue of their interest in Jesus Christ, are in the holy Scripture, by reason of divers allusions, called priests; which name, in the sense before related, belonging unto them as such, cannot on this ground, be ascribed to any part of them distinguished any ways from the rest, by virtue of such distinction.

2. The second thing I observe concerning the business in hand, is, that the offering up unto God of some *metaphorical sacrifices*, in a peculiar manner, is appropriate

unto men set apart for the work of the ministry: as the slaying of men's lusts, and the offering up of them being converted by the preaching of the gospel unto God: so saint Paul, of his ministry, Rom. xv. 16. 'That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God; that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable,' &c. Ministers preaching the gospel, to the conversion of souls, are said to kill men's lusts, and offer them up unto God, as the fruit of their calling; as Abel brought unto him an acceptable sacrifice of the fruit of his flock; and so also in respect of divers other acts of their duty, which they perform in the name of their congregations. Now these sacrifices are appropriate to the ministers of the gospel, not in regard of the matter, for others also may convert souls unto God, and offer up prayers and praises, in the name of their companions; but in respect of the manner, they do it publicly and ordinarily; others privately, or in extraordinary cases. Now if the ministers, who are thus God's instruments for the conversion of souls, be themselves ingrafted into Christ; all the acts they perform in that great work, are but parts of their own duty, of the same nature in that regard with the rest of our spiritual sacrifices; so that they have not by them any farther peculiar interest in the office of the priesthood more than others: but if these preachers themselves do not belong unto the covenant of grace, as God oftentimes out of his care for his flock, bestows gifts upon some for the good of others, on whom he will bestow no graces for the benefit of their own souls, men may administer that consolation out of the word unto their flock, which themselves never tasted, preach to others, and be themselves castaways. St. Paul tells us that some preach Christ out of envy and contention; not sincerely, but on purpose to add to his affliction; and yet, saith he, 'whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and therein do I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice;' Phil. i. 16—18. Surely had there been no good effected by such preaching, St. Paul would not have rejoiced in it; and yet doubtless it was no evidence of sanctification, to preach Christ merely out of contention (and on purpose to add to the affliction of his servants): but, I say, if the Lord *shall be pleased at any time to* make use of such, as instru-

ments in his glorious work of converting souls, shall we think that it is looked upon as their sacrifice unto God? No, surely, the soul of the Lord is delighted with the repentance of sinners; but all the sacrifices of these wicked men are an abomination unto him, and therefore they have no interest in it; neither can they from hence be said to be priests of God, seeing they continue dogs and unclean beasts, &c. so that all the right unto this priestly office, seems to be resolved into, and be the same with, the common interest of all believers in Christ, whereby they have a participation of his office. Whence I affirm,

3. That the name of priests is nowhere in the Scripture attributed peculiarly and distinctly to the ministers of the gospel as such; let any produce an instance to the contrary, and this controversy is at an end: yea, that which puts a difference between them, and the rest of the people of God's holiness, seems to be a more immediate participation of Christ's prophetical office, to teach, instruct, and declare the will of God unto men, and not of his sacerdotal, to offer sacrifices for men unto God. Now I could never observe that any of those, who were so forward of late to style themselves priests, were at all greedy of the appellation of prophets; no, this they were content to let go: name and thing; and yet when Christ ascended on high, he gave some to be prophets, for the edification of his body, Eph. iv. 11. none as we find to be priests: priests then (like prelates) are a sort of church officers, whom Christ never appointed. Whence I conclude,

4. That whosoever maintaineth any priests of the New Testament, as properly so called, in relation to any altar or sacrifice by them to be offered, doth as much as in him lieth disannul the covenant of grace, and is blasphemously injurious to the priesthood of Christ. The priest and the sacrifice under the New Testament are one and the same; and therefore, they who make themselves priests, must also make themselves Christs, or get another sacrifice of their own. As there is but one God, so there is but 'one mediator of God and man, the man Jesus Christ;' 1 Tim. ii. 5. Now he became the mediator of the New Testament chiefly by his priesthood, because by the eternal Spirit 'he offered up himself unto God;' Heb. ix. 14, 15. Neither is any now called

of God to be a priest as was Aaron, and without such divine vocation to this office, none ought to undertake it, as the apostle argues, Heb. v. Now, the end of any such vocation and office, is quite ceased; being nothing but to offer gifts and sacrifices unto God, Heb. viii. 3. for Christ hath offered one sacrifice for sin for ever, and is 'sat down at the right hand of God,' Heb. x. 12. yea, 'by one offering he hath perfected them that are sanctified;' ver. 14. and if that did procure remission of sins, there must be 'no more offering for sin;' ver. 18. and the surrogation of another makes the blood of Christ to be no better than that of bulls and goats. Now one of these they must do, who make themselves priests (in that sense concerning which we now treat); either get them a new sacrifice of their own, or pretend to offer Christ again:[d] the first seems to have been the fault of those of ours, who made a sacrifice of the sacrament, yet pretended not to believe the real presence of Christ in or under the outward elements or species of them; the other of the Romanists, whose priests, in their mass, blasphemously make themselves mediators between God and his Son, and offering up Christ Jesus for a sacrifice, desire God to accept him; so charging that sacrifice with imperfection, which he offered on the altar of the cross, and making it necessary not only that he should annually, but daily, yea hourly, suffer afresh; so re-crucifying unto themselves the Lord of glory. Farther, themselves confessing that to be a true sacrifice, it is required that that which is offered unto God be destroyed, and cease to be what it was; they do confess by what lies in them to destroy the Son of God, and by their mass have transubstantiated their altars into crosses, their temples into Golgotha's, their prelates into Pilates, their priests into hangmen; tormentors of Jesus Christ. Concerning them and ours, we may shut up this discourse with what the apostle intimates to the Hebrews, viz. that all priests are ceased, who were mortal; now small cause have we to believe them to be immaterial spirits, among whom we find the works of the flesh to have been so frequent.

And this may give us some light into the iniquity of

[d] For offering the host or their Christ they pray: 'Supra quæ, propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris, et accepta habere sicut dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel, et sacrificium patriarchæ nostri Abrahæ:' with many more to that purpose.

those times, whereinto we were lately fallen; in which lord bishops and priests had almost quite oppressed the bishops of the Lord, and ministers of the gospel; how unthankful men were we for the light of the gospel, men that loved darkness rather than light. 'A wonderful and horrible thing was wrought in our land; the prophets prophesied falsely, the priests bare rule by their means,' almost the whole 'people loved to have it so: and what shall we now do in the end thereof?' Jer. v. 30, 31. Such a hasty apostacy was growing on us, as we might justly wonder at, because unparalleled in any church, of any age: but our revolters were profound, hasty men, and eager in their master's service. So what a height of impiety and opposition to Christ the Roman apostacy in a thousand years attained unto; and yet I dare aver that never so many errors and suspicions in a hundred years crept into that church, as did into ours of England in sixteen; and yet I cannot herein give the commendation of so much as industry to our innovators (I accuse not the whole church, but particulars in it, and that had seized themselves of its authority), because they had a platform before them, and materials provided to their hand; and therefore it was an easy thing for them to erect a Babel of antichristian confusion; when the workmen in the Roman apostacy were forced to build in the plain of Christianity without any pre-existent materials, but were fain to use brick and slime of their own provision: besides, they were unacquainted with the main design of Satan, who set them on work, and therefore it is no wonder if those Nimrods oft-times hunted counter, and disturbed each other in their progress; yea, the first mover in church apostacy knows, that now his time is but short, and therefore it behoves him to make speedy work in seducing, lest he be prevented by the coming of Christ.

Then having himself a long tract of time granted unto him, he allowed his agents to take leisure also; but what he doth now must be done quickly, or his whole design will be quashed: and this made him inspire the present business with so much life and vigour. Moreover he was compelled then to sow his tares in the dark, while men slept, taking advantage at the ignorance and embroilment of the times; *if any* man had leisure enough to search, and learning enough

to see and find him at it, he commonly filled the world with clamours against him, and scarce any but his avowed champions durst be his advocates: in our time he was grown bold and impudent, working at noonday; yea, he openly accused and condemned all that durst accuse him for sowing any thing but good wheat, that durst say that the tares of his Arminianism and popery was any thing but true doctrine. Let us give so much way to indignation, we know Satan's trade what it is, to accuse the brethren; as men are called after their professions, one a lawyer, another a physician, so is he the accuser of the brethren. Now surely if ever he set up a shop on earth, to practise his trade in, it was our high commission court, as of late employed, but ἄτεχνως.

CHAP. IV.

Of the duty of God's people in cases extraordinary concerning his worship.

This being thus determined, I return again to the main ζητούμενον, concerning the duty and privilege of the common people of Christianity in sacred things: and first, in cases extraordinary, in which, perhaps, it may be affirmed, that every one (of those I mean before named) is so far a minister of the gospel as to teach and declare the faith to others, although he have no outward calling thereunto; and yet in this case every one for such an undertaking must have a warrant by an immediate call from God; and when God calls there must be no opposition, the thing itself he sends us upon becomes lawful by his mission; 'what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common;' Acts x. 13. never fear the equity of what God sets thee upon; no excuses of disability or any other impediment ought to take place, the Lord can and will supply all such defects: this was Moses's case, Exod. iv. 10, 11. 'O Lord,' saith he, 'I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant: but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? have not I the Lord?' So *also was it with the* prophet Jeremiah, when God

told him that he had ordained him a prophet unto the nations, he replies, 'Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord,' saith he, 'said unto me, Say not I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak;' Jer. i. 6, 7. Nothing can excuse any from going on his message, who can perfect his praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. This the prophet Amos rested upon, when he was questioned, although he were unfit for that heavenly employment, either by education or course of life: 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and said unto me, Go prophesy to my people Israel;' Amos vii. 14, 15. So on the contrary, St. Paul, a man of strong parts, great learning and endowments, of indefatigable industry, and large abilities, yet affirms of himself, that when God called him to preach his word, he 'conferred not with flesh and blood,' but went on presently with his work; Gal. i. 16, 17.

CHAP. V.

Of the several ways of extraordinary calling to the teaching of others. The first way.

Now three ways may a man receive, and be assured that he hath received this divine mission, or know that he is called of God to the preaching of the word; I mean not that persuasion of divine concurrence, which is necessary also for them that are partakers of an ordinary vocation, but which is required in extraordinary cases to them in whom all outward calling is wanting.

1. By immediate revelation.

2. By a concurrence of Scripture rules, directory for such occasions.

3. By some outward acts of Providence, necessitating him thereunto.

For the first, not to speak of light prophetical, whether it consists in a habit, or rather in a transient irradiating motion, nor to discourse of the species, whereby supernatural

things are conveyed to the natural faculty, with the several ways of divine revelation (for St. Paul affirmeth it to have been πολυτρώπως as well as πολυμέρως), with the sundry appellations it received, from the manner whereby it came; I shall only shew what assurance such a one as is thus called may have in himself that he is so called, and how he may manifest it unto others. That men receiving any revelation from God had always an assurance that such it was, to me seems most certain. Neither could I ever approve the note of Gregory on Ezek. i. viz. 'That prophets being accustomed to prophesying, did oftentimes speak of their own spirit, supposing that it proceeded from the spirit of prophesy.'[a] What is this but to question the truth of all prophetical revelations, and to shake the faith that is built upon it? Surely the prophet Jeremiah had an infallible assurance of the author of his message, when he pleaded for himself before the princes, 'Of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears;' chap. xxvi. 15. And Abraham certainly had need of a good assurance whence that motion did proceed, which made him address himself to the sacrificing the son of promise; and that all other prophets had the like evidence of knowledge, concerning the divine verity of their revelations, is unquestionable. Hence are those allusions in the Scripture, whereby it is compared unto things whereof we may be most certain by the assurance of sense. So Amos iii. 8. 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' and Jer. xx. 9. 'His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones;' things sensible enough. Haply Satan may so far delude false prophets, as to make them suppose their lying vanities are from above: whence they are said to be 'prophets of the deceit of their own heart;' Jer. xxiii. 26. being deceived, as well as deceivers; thinking in themselves, as well as speaking unto others, 'He saith,' ver. 31. But that any true prophets should not know a true revelation from a motion of their own hearts, wants not much of blasphemy. The Lord surely supposes that assurance of discerning, when he gives that command; 'The pro-

[a] Sciendum est quod aliquando prophetæ sancti dum consuluntur ex magno usu prophetandi quædam ex suo spiritu proferunt, et se hoc ex prophetiæ spiritu dicere suspicantur. Gregor. Hom. 1. in Ezek.

phet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat?' Jer. xxiii. 28. He must be both blind and mad that shall mistake wheat for chaff; and on the contrary, what some men speak of a hidden instinct from God, moving the minds of men, yet so as they know not whether it be from him or no, may better serve to illustrate Plutarch's discourse of Socrates' Dæmon, than any passage in holy writ. St. Austin says,[b] his mother would affirm, that though she could not express it, yet she could discern the difference between God's revelation, and her own dreams. In which relation, I doubt not but the learned father took advantage from the good old woman's words of what she could do, to declare what might be done, of every one that had such immediate revelations. Briefly then, the Spirit of God never so extraordinarily moveth the mind of man to apprehend any thing of this kind whereof we speak, but it also illustrateth it with a knowledge and assurance that it is divinely moved to this apprehension. Now, because it is agreed on all sides, that light prophetical is no permanent habit in the minds of the prophets, but a transient impression, of itself not apt to give any such assurance, it may be questioned from what other principle it doth proceed. But not to pry into things perhaps not fully revealed, and seeing St. Paul shews us that in such heavenly raptures there are some things unutterable of them, and incomprehensible of us, we may let this rest, amongst those ἄρρητα. It appeareth then from the preceding discourse, that a man pretending to extraordinary vocation, by immediate revelation, in respect of self-persuasion of the truth of his call, he must be as ascertained of it, as he could be of a burning fire in his bones, if there shut up.

[b] Dicebat se discernere (nescio quo sapore quem verbis explicare non poterat) quid interesset inter Deum revelantem, et animam suam somniantem. Aug. Confess.

CHAP. VI.

What assurance men extraordinarily called can give to others, that they are so called in the former way.

The next thing to be considered is, what assurance he can give to others, and by what means, that he is so called. Now the matter or subject of their employment may give us some light to this consideration: and this is, either the inchoation of some divine work to be established amongst men, by virtue of a new, and before never-heard-of, revelation of God's will; or a restoration of the same, when collapsed and corrupted by the sin of men. To the first of these, God never sendeth any but whom he doth so extraordinarily and immediately call and ordain for that purpose; and that this may be manifested unto others, he always accompanieth them with his own almighty power, in the working of such miracles as may make them be believed, for the very works' sake which God by them doth effect. This we may see in Moses, and (after Jesus Christ anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows to preach the gospel) the apostles: but this may pass, for nothing in such a way shall ever again take place, God having ultimately revealed his mind concerning his worship and our salvation; a curse being denounced to man or angel that shall pretend to revelation, for the altering or changing one jot or tittle of the gospel. For the other, the work of reformation, there being, ever since the writing of his word, an infallible rule for the performance of it, making it fall within the duty and ability of men, partakers of an ordinary vocation, and instructed with ordinary gifts; God doth not always immediately call men unto it: but yet, because oftentimes he hath so done, we may inquire what assurance they could give of this their calling to that employment. Our Saviour Christ informs us, that a prophet is often without honour in his own country. The honour of a prophet, is to have credence given to his message; of which it should seem, Jonas was above measure zealous, yet such is the cursed infidelity and hardness of men's hearts, that though they cried, 'Thus saith the Lord,' yet they would reply 'the Lord hath not spoken:' hence are

those pleadings betwixt the prophet Jeremiah and his enemies; the prophet 'averring of a truth, the Lord hath sent me unto you,' and they contesting, 'that the Lord had not sent him, but that he lied in the name of the Lord.' Now to leave them inexcusable, and whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, to convince them that there hath been a prophet amongst them, as also to give the greater credibility to their extraordinary message, to them that were to believe their report, it is necessary that 'the arm of the Lord should be revealed,' working in and by them, in some extraordinary manner; it is certain enough, that God never sent any one extraordinarily, instructed only with ordinary gifts, and for an ordinary end. The aim of their employment I shewed before was extraordinary, even the reparation of something instituted by God, and collapsed by the sin of man; that it may be credible, or appear of a truth that God had sent them for this purpose, they were always furnished with such gifts and abilities, as the utmost reach of human endeavours, with the assistance of common grace, cannot possibly attain. The general opinion is, that God always supplies such with the gift of miracles. Take the word in a large sense for every supernatural product, beyond the ordinary activity of that secondary cause whereby it is effected, and I easily grant it; but in the usual restrained acceptation of it, for outward wonderful works, the power of whose production consists in operation, I something doubt the universal truth of the assertion. We do not read of any such miracles wrought by the prophet Amos, and yet he stands upon his extraordinary immediate vocation; 'I was neither prophet nor the son of a prophet, but the Lord called me,' &c. It sufficeth then, that they be furnished with a supernatural power either in, 1. Discerning; 2. Speaking; 3. Working. The power of discerning, according to the things by it discernible, may be said to be of two sorts; for it is either of things present, beyond the power of human investigation, as to know the thoughts of other men's hearts, or their words not ordinarily to be known, as Elisha discovered the bedchamber discourse of the king of Syria (not that by virtue of their calling they come to be καρδιογνωσται, 'knowers of the heart,' which is God's property alone, but that God doth sometimes reveal such things unto them; for otherwise

no such power is included in the nature of the gift, which is perfective of their knowledge, not by the way of habit, but actual motion in respect of some particulars; and when this was absent, the same Elisha affirmeth, that he knew not why the Shunamitish woman was troubled), or, secondly, of things future and contingent in respect of their secondary causes, not precisely necessitated by their own internal principle of operation, for the effecting of the things so foreknown: and therefore the truth of the foreknowledge, consists in a commensuration to God's purpose. Now effects of this power, are all those predictions of such things which we find in the Old and New Testament, and divers also since. Secondly, The supernatural gift in speaking I intimate, is that of tongues, proper to the times of the gospel, when the worship of God was no longer to be confined to the people of one nation.

The third working, is that which strictly and properly is called the gift of miracles; which are hard, rare, and strange effects, exceeding the whole order of created nature: for whose production God sometimes useth his servants instrumentally, moving and enabling them thereunto by a transient impression of his powerful grace; of which sort the holy Scripture hath innumerable relations. Now with one of those extraordinary gifts at least, sometimes with all, doth the Lord furnish those his messengers of whom we treat: which makes their message a sufficient revelation of God's will, and gives it credibility enough, to stir up faith in some, and leave others inexcusable. All the difficulty is, that there have been Simon Maguses, and are antichrists, falsely pretending to have in themselves this mighty power of God, in one or other of the forenamed kinds. Hence were those many false prophets, dreamers, and wizards, mentioned in the Old Testament, which the Lord himself forewarns us of, as also those agents of that man of sin, 'whose coming is after the working of Satan with powers and signs and lying wonders;' 2 Thess. ii. 9. I mean the juggling priests and Jesuits, pretending falsely by their impostures to the power of miracle-working; though their employment be not to reform, but professedly to corrupt the worship of God. Now in such a case as this, we have, 1. The mercy of God to rely upon, whereby he will guide his into the way of truth, and the

purpose or decree of God, making it impossible that his elect should be deceived by them. 2. Human diligence accompanied with God's blessing, may help us wonderfully in a discovery, whether the pretended miracles be of God, or no; for there is nothing more certain, than that a true and real miracle is beyond the activity of all created power (for if it be not, it is not a miracle); so that the devil and all his emissaries are not able to effect any one act truly miraculous; but, in all their pretences there is a defect discernible, either in respect of the thing itself pretended to be done, or of the manner of its doing, not truly exceeding the power of art or nature, though the apprehension of it, by reason of some hell-conceived circumstances, be above our capacity. Briefly, either the thing is a lie, and so it is easy to feign miracles, or the performance of it is pure juggling, and so it is easy to delude poor mortals. Innumerable of this sort, at the beginning of the reformation, were discovered among the agents of that wonder-working man of sin, by the blessing of God upon human endeavours. Now from such discoveries, a good conclusion may be drawn, against the doctrine they desire by such means to confirm; for as God never worketh true miracles, but for the confirmation of the truth, so will not men pretend such as are false, but to persuade that to others for a truth, which themselves have just reason to be persuaded is a lie. Now if this means fail, 3. God himself hath set down a rule of direction for us, in the time of such difficulty; Deut. xiii. 1—5. 'If there arise among you a prophet or dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, wherefore he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods to serve them; thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet, or dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet or dreamer of dreams shall be put to death.' The sum is, that seeing such men pretend that their revelations and miracles are from heaven, let us search whether the doctrine they seek to confirm by them be from heaven, or no; if it be not, let them be stoned, or accursed, for they

seek to draw us from our God; if it be, let not the curse of a stony heart, to refuse them, be upon us. Where the miracles are true, the doctrine cannot be false; and if the doctrine be true, in all probability the miracles confirming it, are not false; and so much of them, who are immediately called of God from heaven, what assurance they may have in themselves of such a call, and what assurance they can make of it to others. Now such are not to expect any ordinary vocation from men below, God calling them aside to his work from the midst of their brethren: the Lord of the harvest may send labourers into his field, without asking his steward's consent, and they shall speak whatever he saith unto them.

CHAP. VII.

The second way whereby a man may be called extraordinarily.

SECONDLY, A man may be extraordinarily called to the preaching and publishing of God's word, by a concurrence of Scripture rules, directory for such occasions, occurrences, and opportunities of time, place, and persons, as he liveth in, and under. Rules in this kind may be drawn either from express precept, or approved practice: some of these I shall intimate, and leave it to the indifferent reader to judge, whether or no they hold in the application; and all that in this kind I shall propose, I did with submission to better judgments.

Consider then,

1. That of our Saviour to St. Peter, Luke xxii. 32. 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;' which containing nothing but an application of one of the prime dictates of the law of nature, cannot, ought not, to be restrained unto men of any peculiar calling as such. Not to multiply many of this kind (whereof in the Scripture is plenty); add only that of St. James; 'Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death,' &c. From these and the like places it appears to me, that

(1.) There is a *general obligation* on all Christians, to

promote the conversion and instruction of sinners, and man erring from the right way.

Again, Consider that of our Saviour, Matt. v. 15. 'Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house:' to which add that of the apostle, 'If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace;' 1 Cor. xiv. 30. which words, although primarily they intend extraordinary immediate revelations, yet I see no reason why in their equity and extent, they may not be directory for the use of things revealed unto us by Scripture light; at least we may deduce from them, by the way of analogy, that

2. Whatsoever necessary truth is revealed to any out of the word of God, not before known, he ought to have an uncontradicted liberty of declaring that truth, provided that he use such regulated ways for that his declaration, as the church wherein he liveth (if a right church) doth allow.

Farther, see Amos iii. 8. 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? And Jer. xx. 9. 'Then said I, I will not make mention of his name. But his word was in mine heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay:' with the answer of Peter and John, to the rulers of the Jews, Acts iv. 19, 20. 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.'

Whence it appears, that

3. Truth revealed unto any, carries along with it an unmoveable persuasion of conscience (which is powerfully obligatory) that it ought to be published and spoken to others.

That none may take advantage of this to introduce confusion into our congregations, I gave a sufficient caution in the second rule.

Many other observations giving light to the business in hand, might be taken from the common dictates of nature, concurring with many general precepts we have in the Scripture, but omitting them, the next thing I propose is the practice, &c.

1. Of our Saviour Christ himself, who did not only pose the doctors when he was but twelve years old, Luke ii. 46.

but also afterward preached in the synagogue of Nazareth, chap. iv. 18. being neither doctor, nor scribe, nor Levite, but of the tribe of Judah (concerning which tribe it is evident that Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood).

2. Again, in the eighth of the Acts, great persecution arising against the church, after the death of Stephen, they were all scattered abroad from Jerusalem, ver. 1. that is, all the faithful members of the church, who being thus dispersed, went everywhere 'preaching the word,' ver. 4. and to this their publishing of the gospel (having no warrant but the general engagement of all Christians to further the propagation of Christ's kingdom), occasioned by their own persecution, the Lord gave such a blessing, that they were thereby the first planters of a settled congregation among the Gentiles, they and their converts being the first that were honoured by the name of Christians; Acts xi. 21. 26. Neither, 3. is the example of St. Paul altogether impertinent, who with his companions repaired into the synagogues of the Jews, taught them publicly, yea, upon their own request; Acts xiii. 15. Apollos also spake boldly, and preached fervently, when he knew only the baptism of John, and needed himself farther instruction; Acts xviii. 24. It should seem then, in that juncture of time, he that was instructed in any truth, not ordinarily known, might publicly acquaint others with it, though he himself were ignorant in other points of high concernment; yet perhaps now it is not possible that any occurrences should require a precise imitation, of what was not only lawful, but also expedient, in that dawning towards the clear day of the last unchangeable revelation of God's will. Now in these and the like, there is so much variety, such several grounds and circumstances, that no direct rule can from them be drawn, only they may give strength to what from the former shall be concluded.

For a farther light to this discourse, consider what desolate estate the church of God hath been, may be, and at this present in divers places is, reduced to: her silver may become dross, and her wine be mixed with water; the faithful city becoming a harlot, her shepherds may be turned into dumb sleeping dogs and devouring wolves; the watchmen may be turned smiters, her prophets to prophesy falsely, and her priests to bear rule *by lies; the* commandments of God

being made void by the traditions of men, superstition, human inventions, will-worship, may defile and contaminate the service of God; yea, and greater abominations[a] may men possessing Moses' chair by succession do. Now that the temple of God hath been thus made a den of thieves, that the abomination of desolation hath been set up in the holy place, is evident from the Jewish and Christian church; for in the one it was clearly so, when the government of it was devolved to the scribes and Pharisees, and in the other, when the man of sin had exalted himself in the midst thereof. Now suppose a man, living in the midst and height of such a sad apostacy, when a universal darkness had spread itself over the face of the church, if the Lord be pleased to reveal unto him out of his word some points of faith, then either not all known, or generally disbelieved, yet a right belief whereof is necessary to salvation; and farther, out of the same word shall discover unto him the wickedness of that apostacy, and the means to remove it, I demand, Whether that man, without expecting any call from the fomenters and maintainers of those errors, with which the church at that time is only not destroyed, may not preach, publish, and publicly declare the said truths to others (the knowledge of them being so necessary for the good of their souls), and conclude himself thereunto called of God, by virtue of the forenamed, and other the like rules? Truly for my part (under correction) I conceive he may, nay, he ought, neither is any other outward call requisite to constitute him a preacher of the gospel, than the consent of God's people to be instructed by him. For instance; suppose that God should reveal the truth of the gospel to a mere layman (as they say) in Italy, so that he be fully convinced thereof; what shall he now do? abstain from publishing it, though he be persuaded in conscience that a great door of utterance might be granted unto him, only because some heretical, simonical, wicked, antichristian prelate, hath not ordained him minister; who yet would not do it, unless he will subscribe to those errors and heresies which he is persuaded to be such? Truly I think by so abstaining, he should sin against the law of charity, in seeing (not the ox or ass of his brother falling into the pit, but) their precious souls sinking to everlasting damnation,

[a] Ezek. xxii. 27, 28. viii. 13.

and not preventing it when he might; and were he indeed truly angry with his whole nation, he might have the advantage of an Italian revenge.

Moreover, he should sin against the precept of Christ, by hiding his light under a bushel, and napkining up his talent, an increase whereof will be required of him at the last day. Now with this I was always so well satisfied, that I ever deemed all curious disquisition after the outward vocation of our first reformers, Luther, Calvin, &c. altogether needless; the case in their days being exactly that which I have laid down.

Come we now to the third and last way, whereby men not partakers of any outward ordinary vocation, may yet receive a sufficient warrant for the preaching and publishing of the gospel, and that by some outward act of providence guiding them thereunto; for example, put case a Christian man, should by any chance of providence be cast by shipwreck or otherwise, upon the country of some barbarous people, that never heard of the name of Christ, and there by his goodness that brought him thither, be received amongst them, into civil human society; may he not, nay, ought he not, to preach Christ unto them? and if God give a blessing to his endeavours, may he not become a pastor to the converted souls? None I hope makes any doubt of it; and in the primitive times, nothing was more frequent than such examples; thus were the Indians and the Moors turned to the faith, as you may see in Eusebius: yea, great was the liberty which in the first church was used in this kind, presently after the supernatural gift of tongues ceased amongst men.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the liberty and duty of gifted uncalled Christians, in the exercise of divers acts of God's worship.

And thus have I declared what I conceive, concerning extraordinary calling to the public teaching of the word, in what cases only it useth to take place; whence I conclude, that whosoever pretends unto it, not warranted by an evidence of one of those three ways that God taketh in such proceedings, is but a pretender, an impostor, and ought accordingly to be rejected of all God's people in other cases, not to disuse what outward ordinary occasion from them who are intrusted by commission from God with that power, doth confer upon persons so called, we must needs grant it a negative voice, in the admission of any to the public preaching of the gospel; if they come not in at that door, they do climb over the wall, if they make any entrance at all. It remains then, to shut up all, that it be declared, what private Christians, living in a pure, orthodox, well ordered church may do, and how far they may interest themselves, in holy soul-concerning affairs, both in respect of their own particular, and of their brethren in the midst of whom they live: in which determination, because it concerneth men of low degree, and those that comparatively may be said to be unlearned, I shall labour to express the conceivings of my mind, in as familiar, plain observations as I can; only thus much I desire may be premised, that the principles and rules of that church government, from which, in the following assertions, I desire not to wander, is of that (to which I do, and always in my poor judgment have adhered, since by God's assistance I had engaged myself to the study of his word) which commonly is called presbyterial, or synodical, in opposition to prelatical or diocesan on the one side; and that which is commonly called independent or congregational on the other.

First then, a diligent searching of the Scriptures, with fervent prayers to Almighty God, for the taking away that veil of ignorance, which by nature is before their eyes, that they

may come to a saving knowledge in, and a right understanding of them, is not only lawful and convenient for all men professing the name of Christ, but also absolutely necessary because commanded, yea indeed commanded because the end so to be attained is absolutely necessary to salvation. To confirm this, I need not multiply precepts out of the Old or New Testament, such as that of Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony,' and that of John v. 39. 'Search the Scriptures,' which are innumerable; nor yet heap up motives unto it, such as are the description of the heavenly country, whither we are going, in them is contained; John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. v. 1. Rev. xxii. 1, &c. the way by which we are to travel laid down; John v. 39. xiv. 5, 6. Jesus Christ, whom we must labour to be like, painted out; Gal. iii. 1. and the back-parts of God discovered; Deut. xxix. 29. by them only true spiritual wisdom is conveyed to our souls; Jer. viii. 9. whereby we may become even wiser than our teachers; Psal. cxix. in them all comfort and consolation is to be had, in the time of danger and trouble; Psal. cxix. 54. 71, 72. in brief, the knowledge of Christ, which is life eternal; John xvii. 3. yea, all that can be said in this kind comes infinitely short of those treasures of wisdom, riches, and goodness, which are contained in them; 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;' Psal. xix. 7. but this duty of the people is clear and confessed; the objections of the Papists against it being, for the most part, so many blasphemies against the holy word of God; they accuse it of difficulty, which God affirms to 'make wise the simple;' of obscurity, which 'openeth the eyes of the blind;' to be a dead letter, a nose of wax, which 'is quick and powerful, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit;' to be weak and insufficient, which 'is able to make the man of God perfect and wise unto salvation;' yea, that word which the apostle affirmeth to be 'profitable for reproof,' is not in any thing more full, than in reproving of this blasphemy.

Secondly, They may not only (as before) search the Scriptures, but also examine, and try by them the doctrine that publicly is taught unto them; the people of God must not be like 'children, tossed to and *fro*, and carried about with every

wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;' Eph. iv. 14. all is not presently gospel, that is spoken in the pulpit; it is not long since, that altar-worship, Arminianism, popery, superstition, &c. were freely preached in this kingdom; now what shall the people of God do in such a case? yield to every breath, to every puff of false doctrine? or rather try it by the word of God, and if it be not agreeable thereunto, cast it out like salt that hath lost its savour: must not the people take care that they be not seduced? must they not 'beware of false prophets, which come unto them in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves?' and how shall they do this? what way remains, but a trying their doctrine by the rule? In these evil days wherein we live, I hear many daily complaining, that there is such difference, and contrariety among preachers, they know not what to do, nor scarce what to believe: my answer is, Do but your own duty, and this trouble is at an end; is there any contrariety in the book of God? pin not your faith upon men's opinions, the Bible is the touchstone: that there is such diversity amongst teachers is their fault, who should think all the same thing; but that this is so troublesome to you, is your own fault, for neglecting your duty of trying all things by the word. Alas, you are in a miserable condition, if you have all this while relied on the authority of men in heavenly things: he that builds his faith upon preachers, though they preach nothing but truth, and he pretend to believe it, hath indeed no faith at all, but a wavering opinion, built upon a rotten foundation. Whatever then is taught you, you must go with it 'to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them;' Isa. viii. 20. Yea, the Bereans are highly extolled for searching whether the doctrine concerning our Saviour, preached by St. Paul, were so or no, Acts xvii. 11. agreeably to the precept of the same preacher, 1 Thess. v. 21. 'Make trial of all things, and hold fast that which is good;' as also to that of St. John, 1 Epist. iv. 1. 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false spirits are gone out into the world;' prophets then must be tried, before they be trusted: now the reason of this holds still. There are many false teachers

abroad in the world, wherefore try every one, try his spirit, his spiritual gift of teaching, and that by the word of God. And here you have a clear rule laid down, how you may extricate yourselves from the former perplexity: nay, St. Paul himself speaking to understanding Christians, requires them to judge of it; 1 Cor. x. 15. 'I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.' Hence are those cautions, that the people should look that none do seduce them, Matt. xxiv. 4. to which end they must have their souls 'exercised in the word of God, to discern good and evil;' Heb. v. 14. Thus also in one place, Christ biddeth his followers hear the Pharisees, and do what they should command, because they sat in Moses' chair, Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. and yet in another place, gives them a caution to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees; Matt. xvi. 12. It remaineth then, that the people are bound to hear those who possess the place of teaching in the church, but withal they must beware that it contain nothing of the old leaven, to which end they must try it by the word of God: when, as St. Paul prayeth for the Philippians, 'that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge, and all judgment, that they might approve things that are excellent;' Phil. i. 9, 10. Unless ministers will answer for all those souls they shall mislead, and excuse them before God at the day of trial, they ought not to debar them from trying their doctrine: now this they cannot do, for 'if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit' of destruction. And here I might have just occasion of complaint, 1. Of the superstitious pride of the late clergy of this land, who could not endure to have their doctrine tried by their auditors, crying to poor men with the Pharisees, John ix. 'You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us?' A pretty world it is like to be, when the sheep will needs teach their pastors; nothing would serve them, but a blind submission to the loose dictates of their cobweb homilies: he saw farther, sure, in the darkness of popery, who contended that a whole general council ought to give place to a simple layman, urging Scripture, or speaking reason.

Now surely this is very far from that gentleness, meekness, and aptness to teach, which St. Paul requireth in a man of God, *a minister of the* gospel. 2. The negligence

of the people also, might here come under a just reproof, who have not laboured to discern the voice of the hireling from that of the true shepherd, but have promiscuously followed the new fangledness and heretical errors of every time-serving starver of souls. Whence proceedeth all that misery the land now groaneth under, but that we have had a people willing to be led by a corrupted clergy, freely drinking in the poison, wherewith they were tainted? 'The prophets prophesied falsely, the priests bare rule by their means, the people loved to have it so: but what shall we now do in the end thereof?' Who could ever have thought, that the people of England would have yielded a willing ear to so many popish errors, and an obedient shoulder to such a heavy burden of superstitions, as in a few years were instilled into them, and laid upon them voluntarily by their own sinful neglect, ensnaring their consciences by the omission of this duty we insist upon, of examining by the word what is taught unto them?[a] But this is no place for complaints, and this is a second thing which the people, distinct from their pastors, may do for their own edification. Now whether they do this privately, every one apart, or by assembling more together, is altogether indifferent. And that this was observed by private Christians in the primitive times is very apparent.

Come we in the third place to what either their duty binds them to, or otherwise by the word they are allowed to do in sacred performances, having reference to others; look then in general upon those things we find them tied unto, by virtue of special precept; such as are to 'warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak;' 1 Thess. v. 14. to admonish and reprove offending brethren; Matt. xviii. 15. to instruct the ignorant; John iv. 29. Acts xviii. 26. to exhort the negligent; Heb. iii. 15. x. 24, 25. to comfort the afflicted; 1 Thess. v. 11. to restore him that falleth; Gal. vi. 1. to visit the sick; Matt. xxv. 36. 40. to reconcile those that are at variance; Matt. v. 9. to contend for the truth; Jude 3. 1 Pet. iii. 15. to pray for the sinner not unto death; 1 John v. 16. to edify one another in their most holy faith; Jude 20. to speak to themselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual

[a] Vos facite quod scriptum est, ut uno dicente, omnes examinent, me ergo dicente quod sentio, vos discernite et examinate. Orig. in Josh. Hom. 21.

songs; Eph. v. 19. to be ready to answer every man, in giving account of their faith; Col. iv. 6. to mark them that make divisions; Rom. xvi. 17. with innumerable others to the like purpose. It remaineth them to consider, secondly, in particular, what course they may take, beyond private conference between man and man, by indiction of time or place, for the fulfilling of what by these precepts, and the like is of them required. To which I answer,

First, Lawful things must be done lawfully; if any unlawful circumstance attends the performance of a lawful action, it vitiates the whole work, for 'bonum oritur ex integris;' for instance, to reprove an offender is a Christian duty, but for a private man to do it in the public congregation, whilst the minister is preaching, were, instead of a good act, a foul crime, being a notorious disturbance of church decency and order.

Secondly, That for a public, formal, ministerial teaching, two things are required in the teacher: First, Gifts from God; Secondly, Authority from the church (I speak now of ordinary cases); he that wants either, is no true pastor. For the first, God sends none upon an employment but whom he fits with gifts for it: 1. Not one command in the Scripture made to teachers; 2. Not one rule for their direction; 3. Not one promise to their endeavours; 4. Not any end of their employment; 5. Not one encouragement to their duty; 6. Not one reproof for their negligence; 7. Not the least intimation of their reward, but cuts off ungifted idol pastors, from any true interest in the calling. And for the other, that want authority from the church, neither ought they to undertake any formal act, properly belonging to the ministry, such as is solemn teaching of the word; for, 1. They are none of Christ's officers; Eph. iv. 11. 2. They are expressly forbidden it; Jer. xxiii. 21. Heb. v. 4. 3. The blessing on the word is promised only to sent teachers; Rom. x. 14, 15. 4. If to be gifted, be to be called, then, (1.) Every one might undertake so much in sacred duties, as he fancies himself to be able to perform; (2.) Children (as they report of Athanasius[b]) might baptize; (3.) Every common Christian might administer the communion: but endless are the arguments that might be multiplied against this fancy:

[b] *Eusebius, Ruf.*

in a word, if our Saviour Christ be the God of order, he hath left his church to no such confusion.

Thirdly, That to appoint time and place, for the doing of that which God hath appointed indefinitely to be done, in time and place, rather commends than vitiates the duty; so did Job's friends in the duty of comforting the afflicted, they made an appointment together to come and comfort him; Job ii. 11. and so did they, Zech. viii. 21. and so did David, Psal. cxix. 62.

Fourthly, There is much difference between opening or interpreting the word, and applying the word upon the advantage of such an approved interpretation; as also between an authoritative act, or doing a thing by virtue of special office, and a charitable act, or doing a thing out of a motion of Christian love.

Fifthly, It may be observed concerning gifts, 1. That the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, are of two sorts; some being bestowed for the sanctification of God's people, some for the edification of his church, some of a private allay, looking primarily inwards, to the saving of his soul on whom they are bestowed (though in their fruits also they have a relation and habitude to others), other some, aiming at the commonwealth or profit of the whole church, as such: of the first sort are those mentioned, Gal. v. 22, 23. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,' &c. with all other graces that are necessary to make the man of God perfect, in all holiness and the fear of the Lord; the other are those *χαρίσματα πνευματικά*, spiritual gifts of teaching, praying, prophesying, mentioned 1 Cor. xiv. and in other places.

2. That all these gifts coming down from the Father of lights, are given by the same Spirit, 'dividing to every one as he will;' 1 Cor. xii. 11. he is not tied in the bestowing of his gifts to any sort, estate, calling, or condition of men, but worketh them freely, as it pleaseth him, in whom he will; the Spirit there mentioned is that God which 'worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will;' Eph. i. 11. they are neither deserved by our goodness, nor obtained by our endeavours.

3. That the end why God bestoweth these gifts on any, is merely, that within the bounds of their own calling

(in which they are circumscribed, 1 Cor. i. 24.) they should use them to his glory, and the edification of his church. 'For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal;' 1 Cor. xii. 7. Christ gives none of his talents to be bound up in napkins, but expects his own with increase;[c] and from these considerations it is easily discernible, both what the people of God, distinct from their pastors in a well-ordered church, may do in this kind whereof we treat, and how. In general then I assert,

That for the improving of knowledge, the increasing of Christian charity, for the furtherance of a strict and holy communion of that spiritual love and amity which ought to be amongst the brethren, they may of their own accord assemble together, to consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works, to stir up the gifts that are in them, yielding and receiving mutual consolation, by the fruits of their most holy faith. Now because there be many Uzzahs amongst us, who have an itching desire to be fingering of the ark, thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think, and like the ambitious sons of Levi, taking too much upon them; it will not be amiss to give two cautions, deducted from the former rules. First, That they do not, under a pretence of Christian liberty and freedom of conscience, cast away all brotherly amity, and cut themselves off from the communion of the church; Christ hath not purchased a liberty for any to rent his body; they will prove at length to be no duties of piety, which break the sacred bonds of charity.

Men ought not, under a pretence of congregating themselves to serve their God, separate from their brethren, neglecting the public assemblies, as was the manner of some, rebuked by the apostle, Heb. x. 25. There be peculiar blessings, and transcendent privileges annexed to public assemblies, which accompany not private men to their recesses; the sharp-edged sword becomes more keen, when set on by a skilful master of the assemblies; and when the water of the word flows there, the Spirit of God moves upon the face thereof, to make it effectual in our hearts. 'What? despise you the church of God?' 1 Cor. xi. 22.

Secondly, As the *ministry*, so also ought the ministers,

[c] *Eccles.* xii. 9.

to have that regard, respect, and obedience, which is due to their labours in that sacred calling. Would we could not too frequently see more puffed up with the conceit of their own gifts, into a contempt of the most learned and pious pastors; 'these are spots in your feasts of charity, clouds without water, carried about of winds.' It must doubtless be an evil root, that bringeth forth such bitter fruit. Wherefore let not our brethren fall into this condemnation, lest there be an evil report, raised by them that are without; but 'remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God;' Heb. xiii. 7. There is no greater evidence of the heavenly improvement you make by your recesses, than that you 'obey them that are guides unto you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you;' ver. 17. Let not them who despise a faithful painful minister in public, flatter themselves, with hope of a blessing on their endeavours in private. Let them pretend what they will, they have not an equal respect unto all God's ordinances. Wherefore that the coming together in this sort may be for the better, and not for the worse, observe these things:

Now for what gifts (that are as before freely bestowed), whose exercise is permitted, unto such men, so assembled; I mean in a private family, or two or three met *ὁμοθύμαδον* in one.

And first we may name the gift of prayer, whose exercise must not be exempted from such assemblies, if any be granted; these are the times, wherein the Spirit of grace and supplication is promised to be poured out upon the Jerusalem of God; Zech. xii. 10. Now God having bestowed the gift, and requiring the duty, his people ought not to be hindered in the performance of it. Are all those precepts to pray in the Scriptures, only for our closets? When the church was in distress for the imprisonment of Peter, there was a meeting at the house of Mary the mother of John; Acts xii. 12. 'Many were gathered together, praying,' saith the text; a sufficient warrant for the people of God in like cases. The churches are in no less distress now, than at that time; and in some congregations the ministers are so op-

pressed, that publicly they dare not, in others so corrupted that they will not, pray for the prosperity of Jerusalem. Now truly it were a disconsolate thing, for any one of God's servants to say, during all these straits, I never joined with any of God's children in the pouring out of my prayer in the behalf of his church; neither can I see how this can possibly be prevented, but by the former means; to which add the counsel of St. Paul, speaking to themselves, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts unto the Lord;' Eph. v. 19.

Secondly, They may exercise the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in the ways of the Lord; comforting, strengthening, and encouraging each other with the same consolations and promises, which by the benefit of the public ministry, they have received from the word. Thus in time of distress the prophet Malachi tells us, that 'they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard,' &c. chap. iii. 16. comforting (as it appears) one another in the promises of God made unto his church, against the flourishing of the wicked, and overflowing of ungodliness, the persecution of tyrants, and impurity of transgressors.

Thirdly, They may make use of the tongue of the learned (if given unto them) to speak a word in season to him that is weary;' Isa. l. 4. for being commanded to confess their faults one to another, James v. 16. they have power also to apply to them that are penitent the promises of mercy. We should never be commanded to open our wounds to them who have no balm to pour into them; he shall have cold comfort who seeks for counsel from a dumb man; so that in this, and the like cases, they may apply unto, and instruct one another in the word of God, doing it as a charitable duty, and not as out of necessary function, even as Aquila and Priscilla expounded unto Apollos the word of God more perfectly than he knew it before; Acts xviii. 23. In sum, and not to enlarge this discourse with any more particulars, the people of God are allowed all quiet and peaceable means, whereby they may help each other forward in the knowledge of godliness, and the way towards heaven. Now for the close of this discourse, I will remove *some objections, that I have heard* godly men, and men not

unlearned lay against it, out of a zeal not unlike that of Joshua, for Moses' sake, the constitute pastor's sake (to whom, though I might briefly answer with Moses, 'I would to God all the Lord's people were prophets;' I heartily wish that every one of them had such a plentiful measure of spiritual endowments, that they might become wise unto salvation, above many of their teachers, in which vote I make no doubt but every one will concur with me, who have the least experimental knowledge; what a burden upon the shoulders, what a grief unto the soul of a minister, knowing and desiring to discharge his duty, is an ignorant congregation, of which, thanks to our prelates, pluralists, non-residents, homilies, service-book and ceremonies, we have too many in this kingdom; the many also of our ministers in this church, taking for their directory the laws and penalties of men, informing what they should not do, if they would avoid their punishment, and not the precepts of God, what they should as their duty do, if they meant to please him, and knowing there was no statute, whereon they might be sued for (pardon the expression) the dilapidation of souls, so their own houses were ceiled, they cared not at all though the church of God lay waste), I say, though I might thus answer, with opening my desire for the increasing of knowledge among the people; of which, I take this to be an effectual means, yet I will give brief answers, to the several objections.

Object. 1. Then this seems to favour all allowance of licentious conventicles, which in all places the laws have condemned, learned men in all ages have abhorred, as the seminaries of faction and schism in the church of God.

Ans. That (under correction) I conceive, that the law layeth hold of none, as peccant in such a kind, but only those, who have pre-declared themselves to be opposers of the worship of God, in the public assemblies of that church wherein they live: now the patronage of any such, I before rejected; neither do I conceive, that they ought at all to be allowed the benefit of private meetings, who wilfully abstain from the public congregations, so long as the true worship of God is held forth in them: yea, how averse I have ever been from that kind of confused licentiousness in any church, I have *somewhile since* declared, in an answer (drawn up for my

own and private friends' satisfactions) to the arguments of the Remonstrants, in their Apology, and replies to Vedelius, with other treatises, for such a liberty of prophesying, as they term it. If then the law account only such assemblies to be conventicles, wherein the assemblers contemn and despise the service of God in public, I have not spoken one word in favour of them: and for that canon which was mounted against them, whether intentionally, in the first institution of it, it was moulded, and framed against Anabaptists, or no, I cannot tell; but this I am sure, that in the discharge of it, it did execution oftentimes, upon such as had Christ's precept and promise, to warrant their assembling; Matt. xviii. 19, 20. Not to contend about words, would to God that which is good might not be persecuted into odious appellations, and called evil, when it is otherwise; so to oppose it to the tyrannical oppression of the enemies of the gospel: the thing itself, rightly understood, can scarce be condemned of any, who envies not the salvation of souls. They that would banish the gospel from our houses, would not much care, if it were gone from our hearts; from our houses, I say, for it is all one whether these duties be performed in one family, or a collection of more; some one is bigger than ten other; shall their assembling to perform what is lawful for that one, be condemned for a conventicle? Where is the law for that? or what is there in all this more than God required of his ancient people, as I shewed before?

Or must a master of a family cease praying in his family, and instructing his children, and servants in the ways of the Lord, for fear of being counted a preacher in a tub? Things were scarcely carried with an equal hand, for the kingdom of Christ, when orders came forth on the one side, to give liberty to the profane multitude to assemble themselves at heathenish sports, with bestial exclamations, on the Lord's own day; and on the other, to punish them who durst gather themselves together for prayer, or the singing of psalms; but I hope, through God's blessing, we shall be for ever quit of all such ecclesiastical discipline, as must be exercised according to the interest of idle drones, whom it concerneth to see that there be none to try or examine their doctrine, or of superstitious innovators, who desire to obtrude their *fancies upon the* unwary people. Whence comes it

that we have such an innumerable multitude of ignorant stupid souls, unacquainted with the very principles of religion, but from the discountenancing of these means of increasing knowledge; by men who would not labour to do it themselves? O that we could see the many swearers, and drunkards, and sabbath-breakers, &c. in this nation, guilty only of this crime; would the kingdom were so happy, the church so holy!

Object. 2. Men are apt to pride themselves in their gifts, and flatter themselves in their performances, so that let them approach as nigh as the tabernacle, and you shall quickly have them encroaching upon the priest's office also, and by an over-weening of their own endeavours, create themselves pastors in separate congregations.

Ans. It cannot be, but offences will come, so long as there is malice in Satan, and corruption in men, there is no doubt, but there is danger of some such thing; but hereof the liberty mentioned is not the cause, but an accidental occasion only, no way blameable; gifts must not be condemned, because they may be abused: God-fearing men will remember Korah, knowing, as one says well, that Uzzah had better ventured the falling than the fingering of the ark: they that truly love their souls, will not suffer themselves to be carried away by false conceit, so far as to help overthrow the very constitution of any church by confusion, or the flourishing of it by ignorance, both which, would certainly follow such courses; knowledge if alone puffeth up, but joined to charity it edifieth.

Object. 3. But may not this be a means for men to vent and broach their own private fancies unto others? to foment and cherish errors in one another? to give false interpretations of the word, there being no way to prevent it?

Ans. For interpreting of the word, I speak not, but applying of it being rightly interpreted; and for the rest, would to God the complaints were not true, of those things that have for divers years in this church been done publicly, and outwardly according to order! but that no inconvenience arise from hence, the care rests on them to whom the dispensation of the word is committed, whose sedulous endeavour to reprove and convince all unsound doctrine, not agreeing to the form of wholesome words, is the sovereign and only re-

medy to cure, or means to prevent this evil. For the close of all, we may observe, that those who are most offended, and afraid, lest others should encroach upon their callings, are for the most part such, as have almost deserted it themselves, neglecting their own employment, when they are the busiest of mortals in things of this world. To conclude, then, for what I have delivered in this particular, I conceive that I have the judgment and practice of the whole church of Scotland, agreeable to the word of God, for my warrant; witness the act of their assembly at Edinburgh, An. 1641. wherewith the learned Rutherford concludes his defence of their discipline, with whose words I will shut up this discourse; 'Our assembly also, commandeth godly conference at all occasional meetings, or as God's providence shall dispose, as the word of God commandeth, providing none invade the pastor's office, to preach the word, who are not called thereunto by God and his church.'

Τῷ Θεῷ μονῳ σοφῳ δοξα.

ESHCOL;

A

CLUSTER OF THE FRUIT OF CANAAN;

BROUGHT TO THE BORDERS,

FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE SAINTS,
TRAVELLING THITHERWARD, WITH THEIR FACES TOWARDS ZION.

OR,

RULES OF DIRECTION,

FOR THE WALKING OF THE SAINTS IN FELLOWSHIP,
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF THE GOSPEL.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.—1 Pet. ii. 15.

TO THE READER.

THERE are, Christian reader, certain principles in church affairs, generally consented unto by all men aiming at reformation, and the furtherance of the power of godliness therein, however diversified among themselves by singular persuasions, or distinguished by imposed and assumed names and titles; some of these, though not here mentioned, are the bottom and foundation of this following collection of rules for our walking in the fellowship of the gospel: amongst which, these four are the principal:

First, That particular congregations or assemblies of believers, gathered into one body, for a participation of the ordinances of Jesus Christ, under officers of their own, are of divine institution.

Secondly, That every faithful believer is bound by virtue of positive precepts, to join himself to some such single congregation, having the notes and marks whereby a true church may be known and discerned.

Thirdly, That every man's own voluntary consent and submission to the ordinances of Christ in that church whereunto he is joined, is required for his union therewith, and fellowship therein.

Fourthly, That it is convenient that all believers of one place should join themselves in one congregation, unless through their being too numerous, they are by common consent distinguished into more; which order cannot be disturbed without danger, strife, emulation, and breach of love.

These principles, evident in the word, clear in them-

selves, and owned in the main by all pretending to regular church reformation, not liable to any colourable exception from the Scripture, or pure antiquity, were supposed and taken for granted, at the collection of these ensuing rules.

The apostolical direction and precept in such cases is, that whereunto we have attained, we should walk according to the same rule; unto whose performance the promise annexed is, that if any one be otherwise minded, God will also reveal that unto him. The remaining differences about church order and discipline, are for continuance so ancient, and by the disputes of men made so involved and intricate; the parties at variance so prejudiced and engaged, that although all things of concernment appear to me, as to others, both consenting with me, and dissenting from me, clear in the Scriptures; yet I have little hopes of the accomplishment of the promise in revelation of the truth, as yet contested about in men differently minded; until the obedience of walking suitably and answerably to the same rules agreed on, be more sincerely accomplished.

This persuasion is the more firmly fixed on me every day, because I see men, for the most part, to spend their strength and time more in the opposing of those things wherein others differ from them, than in the practice of those which by themselves and others are owned as of the most necessary concernment: to recall the minds of men, at least of those, who having not much light to judge of things under debate (especially considering their way of handling in their disputing age), may have yet much heat and love towards the ways of gospel obedience, from the entanglements of controversies about church affairs, and to engage them into a serious, humble performance of those duties, which are by the express command of Jesus Christ incumbent on them in what way of order

they walk, are these leaves designed. I shall only add, that though the ensuing rules or directions may be observed, and the duties prescribed performed with much beauty, and many advantages by those who are engaged in some reformed church society; yet they are (if not all of them, yet) for the most part, such as are to be the constant practice of all Christians in their daily conversation, though they are not persuaded of the necessity of any such reformation as is pleaded for: and herein I am fully resolved, that the practice of any one duty here mentioned, by any one soul before neglected, shall be an abundant recompense for the publishing my name with these papers, savouring so little of those ornaments of art or learning, which in things that come to public view, men desire to hold out.

ESHCOL;

CLUSTER OF THE FRUIT OF CANAAN.

Rules of walking in fellowship, with reference to the pastor or minister that watcheth for our souls.

Rule I. The word and all ordinances dispensed in the administration to him committed, by virtue of ministerial authority, are to be diligently attended and submitted unto, with ready obedience in the Lord.

1 Cor. iv. 1. 'Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.'

2 Cor. v. 18. 20. 'God hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.' Chap. iv. 7. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' See chap. vi. 1.

Gal. iv. 14. 'You received me as an angel of God, even as Jesus Christ.'

2 Thess. iii. 14. 'And if any man obey not our words, note that man, and have no company with him.'

Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 'Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.'

Explication I. There is a twofold power for the dispensing of the word: 1. Δύναμις, or ability; 2. Ἐξουσία, or authority: the first, with the attending qualifications mentioned and recounted 1 Tim. iii. 2—7. Tit. i. 6—8. and many other places, is required to be previously in those, as bestowed on them, who are to be called to office of ministration, and may be in several degrees and measures in such as are never set apart thereunto, who thereby are warranted to declare the

gospel, when called by the providence of God thereunto; Rom. x. 14, 15. For the work of preaching unto the conversion of souls, being a moral duty, comprised under that general precept of doing good unto all, the appointment of some to the performance of that work by the way of office, doth not enclose it.

The second, or authority proper to them who orderly are set apart thereunto, ariseth from,

1. Christ's institution of the office, Eph. iv. 11.

2. God's providential designation of the persons, Matt. ix. 38.

3. The church's call, election, appointment, acceptation, submission, Gal. iv. 14. Acts xiv. 23. 1 Thess. v. 13, 14. Acts vi. 3. 2 Cor. viii. 5. which do not give them dominion over the faith of believers, 2 Cor. i. 24. nor make them lords over God's heritage; 1 Pet. v. 3. but intrust them with a stewardly power in the house of God, 1 Cor. iv. 12. that is, the peculiar flock over which, in particular, they are made overseers, Acts xx. 28. of whom the word is to be received,

1. As the truth of God, as also from all others speaking according to gospel order in his name.

2. As the truth held out with ministerial authority to them in particular, according to the institution of Christ: want of a due consideration of these things, lies at the bottom of all that negligence, carelessness, sloth, and wantonness in hearing, which have possessed many professors in these days. There is nothing but a respect to the truth, and authority of God in the administration of the word, that will establish the minds of men in a sober and profitable attending unto it. Neither are men weary of hearing until they are weary of practising.

Motives to the observance of this rule, are;

1. The name wherein they speak and administer; 2 Cor. v. 20. 2. The work which they do; 1 Cor. iii. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

3. The return that they make; Heb. xiii. 17.

4. The regard that the Lord hath of them in his employment; Matt. x. 40—42. Luke x. 16.

5. The account that hearers must make of the word dispensed by them; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. Prov. i. 22—29.

Psal. cxxxviii. 2. Luke x. 16. Mark iv. 24. Heb. ii. 1—3. Heb. iv. 2.

Rule II. His conversation is to be observed, and diligently followed, so far as he walks in the steps of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. iv. 16. 'I beseech you be ye followers of me:' chap. xi. 1. 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.'

Heb. xiii. 7. 'Remember them who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.'

2 Thess. iii. 7. 'For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.'

Phil. iii. 17. 'Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as you have us for an example.'

1 Tim. iv. 12. 'Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.'

1 Pet. v. iii. 'Be ensamples to the flock.'

Explication II. That an exemplar conversation was ever required in the dispensers of holy things both under the Old Testament and New, is apparent: the glorious vestments of the old ministering priests, the soundness and integrity of their person, without maim, imperfection, or blemish, Urim and Thummim, with many other ornaments, though primitively typical of Jesus Christ, yet did not obscurely set out the purity and holiness required in the administrators themselves; Zech. iii. 4. In the New, the shining of their light in all good works, Matt. v. 16. is eminently exacted: and this not only, that no offence be taken at the ways of God, and his worship by them administered, as hath fallen out in the Old Testament, 1 Sam ii. 17. and in the New, Phil. iii. 18, 19. but also that those who are without may be convinced, 1 Tim. iii. 7. and the churches directed in the practice of all the will and mind of God by them revealed; as in the places cited. A pastor's life should be vocal; sermons must be practised, as well as preached; though Noah's workmen built the ark, yet themselves were drowned; God will not accept of the tongue, where the devil hath the soul. Jesus did do and teach; Acts i. 1. If a man teach uprightly, and walk crookedly, more will fall down in the night of his life, than he built in the day of his doctrine.

Now as to the completing of the exemplary life of a minister, it is required, that the principle of it be that of the life of Christ in him, Gal. ii. 20. that when he hath taught others, he be not himself 'a cast-away;' 2 Cor. ix. 27. with which he hath a spiritual understanding, and light given him into the counsel of God, which he is to communicate, 1 John v. 20. 1 Cor. ii. 12. 16. 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7. and that the course of it be singular, Mat. v. 46. Luke vi. 32. whereunto so many eminent qualifications of the person, and duties of conversation are required, 1 Tim. ii. 3—6, &c. Titus i. 6—9. and his aim to be exemplar to the glory of God, 1 Tim. iv. 12. so is their general course, and the end of their faith to be eyed.

Heb. xiii. 7. And their infirmities, whilst really such, and appearing through the manifold temptations whereunto they are in these days exposed; or imposed on them through the zeal of their adversaries, that contend against them, to be covered with love, Gal. iv. 12, 18. and this men will do, when they conscientiously consider, that even the lives of their teachers are an ordinance of God, for their relief under temptations, and provocation unto holiness, zeal, meekness, and self-denial.

Rule III. Prayer and supplications are continually to be made on his behalf, for assistance and success in the work committed to him.

Eph. vi. 18, 19. 'Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador.' 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. 'Brethren pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from the hands of unreasonable and wicked men.' 1 Thess. v. 25. Col. iv. 3. 'Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ:' Heb. xiii. 18.

Acts xii. 5. 'Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him:' Heb. xiii. 7.

Explication III. The greatness of the work; for which who is sufficient? 2 Cor. ii. 16. The strength of the opposition which lies against it, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. Rev. xii. 12. 1 Tim. iv. 3—5. the concernment of men's souls therein, Acts xx.

26—28. Heb. xiii. 7. 1 Tim. iv. 16. the conviction which is to be brought upon the world thereby, Ezek. ii. 5. 1 Cor. i. 23. 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16. its aim and tendency to the glory of God in Christ, call aloud for the most effectual daily concurrence of the saints in their supplications for their supportment. That these are to be for assistance, encouragement, abilities, success, deliverance, and protection, is proved in the rule. As their temptations are multiplied, so ought prayers in their behalf. They have many curses of men against them, Jer. xv. 10. it is hoped, that God hears some prayers for them: when many are not ashamed to revile them in public, some ought to be ashamed not to remember them in private.

Motives.

1. The word will doubtless be effectual, when ability for its administration is a return of prayers; Acts x. 30, 31.

2. The ministers' failing is the people's punishment; Acts viii. 11. Isa. xxx. 20.

3. His prayers are continually for the church; Isa. lxii. 7, 8. Rom. i. 9, &c.

4. That for which he stands in so much need of prayers is the saints' good, and not peculiarly his own. Help him who carries the burden; 1 Tim. iii. 8. Phil. ii. 17. Col. i. 24.

Rule IV. Reverential estimation of him with submission unto him for his work's sake.

1 Cor. iv. 1. 'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.'

1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 'And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

1 Tim. v. 17. 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.'

1 Pet. v. 5. 'Submit yourselves to the elders.'

Heb. xiii. 17. 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.'

Explication IV. The respect and estimation here required is civil, the motive sacred, whence the honour of the minister is the grace of the church, and the regard to him a gospel duty acceptable to God in Christ; 1 Tim. v. 17. Honour and

reverence is due only to eminency in some kind or other; this is given to pastors, by their employment; proved by their titles; they are called 'angels,' Rev. i. 26. Heb. xii. 22. 'bishops' or overseers, Ezek. xiii. 17. Acts xx. 28. 2 Cor. v. 20. 'stewards,' 1 Cor. iv. 1. Titus i. 7. 'men of God,' 1 Sam. ii. 27. 1 Tim. vi. 11. 'rulers,' Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 'lights,' Matt. v. 14. 'salt,' Mat. v. 13. 'fathers,' 1 Cor. iv. 15. And by many more such-like terms are they described. If under these notions they honour God as they ought, God will also honour them as he hath promised; and his people are in conscience to esteem them highly for their work's sake: but if any of them be fallen angels, thrown-down stars, negligent bishops, treacherous ambassadors, lordly revelling stewards, tyrannical or foolish rulers, blind guides, unsavoury salt, insatiate dogs, the Lord and his people shall abhor them, and cut them off in a month; Zech. ii. 8.

Rule V. Maintenance for them and their families, by the administration of earthly things, suitable to the state and condition of the churches, is required from their pastors.

1 Tim. v. 17, 18. 'Let the elders who rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.'

Gal. vi. 6, 7. 'Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

1 Cor. ix. 7. 9—11. 13, 14. 'Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and he which thresheth in hope should be made partaker of his hope: if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing, if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things, live

of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord appointed, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' Matt. x. 9, 10. 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.'

Add to these and the like places, the analogy of the primitive allowance in the church of the Jews.

Explication V. It is a promise to the church under the gospel, 'that kings should be her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers;' Isa. xlix. 23. To such it belongs principally to provide food and protection for those committed to them; the fruit of this promise the churches in many ages have enjoyed: laws by supreme and kingly power have been enacted; giving portions and granting privileges to churches and their pastors. It is so in many places, in the days wherein we live; on this ground, where equitable and righteous laws have allowed a supportment in earthly things to the pastors of churches, arising from such as may receive spiritual benefit by their labour in the gospel, it is thankfully to be accepted and embraced, as an issue of God's providence for the good of his. Besides, our Saviour warranteth his disciples to take and eat of their things, by their consent, to whomsoever the word is preached; Luke x. 8. But it is not always thus; these things may sometimes fail; wherefore the continual care, and frequently the burden, or rather labour of love in providing for the pastors, lies, as in the rule, upon the churches themselves, which they are to do in such a manner as is suitable to the condition wherein they are, and the increase given them of God. This the whole in general, and each member in particular is obliged unto; for which they have as motives,

1. God's appointment, as in the texts cited.

2. The necessity of it: how shall he go on warfare, if he be troubled about the necessities of this life? they are to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry; 1 Tim. iv. 15.

Other works had need to be done for them.

3. The equity of the duty: our Saviour and the apostles plead it out from grounds of equity and justice, and all kind

of laws and rules of righteousness, among all sorts of men; Matt. x. 10. 1 Cor. x. 10. Allowing proportionable rectitude in the way of recompense to it with the wages of the labourer, which to detain is a crying sin; James v. 4, 5. The wretched endeavours of men of corrupt minds, to rob and spoil them of all, that by the providence of God, on any other account, they are righteously possessed of.

Rule VI. Adhering to him, and abiding by him in all trials and persecutions for the word.

2 Tim. iv. 16. 'At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.'

2 Tim. i. 16—18. 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.'

Explication VI. A common cause should be carried on by common assistance; that which concerneth all should be supported by all; when persecutien ariseth for the word's sake, generally it begins with the leaders; 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. the common way to scatter the sheep, is by smiting the shepherds; Zech. xiii. 7, 8. It is for the church's sake he is reviled and persecuted; 2 Tim. ii. 10. Col. i. 24. And therefore it is the church's duty to share with him, and help to bear his burden. All the fault in scattering congregations, hath not been in ministers; the people stood not by them in their trial; the Lord lay it not to their charge. The captain is betrayed, and forced to mean conditions with his enemy, who going on, with assurance of being followed by his soldiers, looking back in the entrance of danger, he finds them all run away. In England usually, no sooner had persecution laid hold of a minister, but the people willingly re-received another: perhaps a wolf instead of a shepherd. Should a wife forsake her husband because he is come in trouble for her sake? when a known duty in such a relation is incumbent upon a man, is the crime of a backslider in spiritual things less? Whilst a pastor lives, if he suffer for the truth, the church cannot desert him, nor cease the per-

formance of all required duties, without horrid contempt of the ordinances of Jesus Christ. This is a burden that is commonly laid on the shoulders of ministers, that for no cause whatsoever they must remove from their charge, when those that lay it on will oftentimes freely leave them and their ministry without any cause at all.

Rule VII. Gathering together in the assembly upon his appointment, with theirs joined with him.

Acts xiv. 27. 'When they were come, and had gathered the church together.'

These are some of the heads wherein the church's duty consisteth, towards him or them that are set over it in the Lord; by all means giving them encouragement to the work, saying also unto them, 'Take heed to the ministry you have received, that you fulfil it in the Lord;' Col. iv. 17. For what concerneth other officers, may easily be deduced hence by analogy and proportion.

Rules to be observed by those who walk in fellowship, and considered to stir up their remembrance in things of mutual duty one towards another, which consisteth in,

Rule I. Affectionate, sincere love in all things, without dissimulation towards one another, like that which Christ bare to his church.

John xv. 12. 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.'

John xiii. 34, 35. 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.'

Rom. xiii. 8. 'Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.'

Eph. v. 2. 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.'

1 Thess. iii. 12. 'The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another.'

1 Thess. iv. 9. 'Yourselves are taught of God to love one another.'

1 Pet. i. 22. 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth *through the Spirit* unto unfeigned love of the

brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.'

1 John iv. 21. 'And this commandment we have from him, that he who loved God, do love his brother also.'

Rom. xii. 10. 'Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love.'

Explication I. Love is the fountain of all duties, towards God and man; Matt. xxii. 3. 7. the substance of all rules that concerneth the saints; the bond of communion; 'the fulfilling of the law;' Rom. xiii. 8—10. the advancement of the honour of the Lord Jesus, and the glory of the gospel. The primitive Christians had a proverbial speech, received, as they said, from Christ; 'Never rejoice but when thou seest thy brother in love;' and it was common among the heathens concerning them; 'See how they love one another;' from their readiness for the accomplishment of that royal precept of laying down their lives for their brethren. It is the fountain, rule, scope, aim, and fruit of gospel communion: and of no one thing of present performance, is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus more eximious, and eminent above all other directions than in this, of mutual, intense, affectionate love amongst his followers, for which he gives them innumerable precepts, exhortations, and motives, but above all, his own heavenly example. To treat of love in its causes, nature, subject, fruits, effects, tendency, eminency, and exaltation; or, but to repeat the places of Scripture wherein these things are mentioned, would not suit with our present intention; only it may be plainly affirmed, that if there were no cause besides, of reformation and walking in fellowship, but this one, that thereby the power and practice of this grace, shamefully to the dishonour of Christ and his gospel, lost amongst those who call themselves Christians might be recovered, it were abundantly enough to give encouragement for the undertaking of it, notwithstanding any oppositions. Now this love is a spiritual grace, wrought by the Holy Ghost, Gal. v. 22. in the hearts of believers, 1 Pet. i. 22. whereby their souls are carried out, 1 Thess. ii. 8. to seek the good of the children of God, as such, Phil. v. Eph. i. 15. Heb. xiii. II. uniting the heart unto the object so beloved, attended with joy, delight, and complacency in their good. The motives unto love, and the grounds of its enforcement from,

1. The command of God, and nature of the whole law, whereof love is the accomplishment; Lev. xix. 34. Matt. xix. 19. Rom. xiii. 9, 10.

2. The eternal, peculiar, distinguishing, faithful love of God towards believers, and the end aimed at therein by him; Ezek. xvi. 8. Deut. i. 8. xxxiii. 3. Zeph. iii. 17. Rom. v. 8. Eph. i. 4.

3. The intense, inexpressible love of Jesus Christ, in his whole humiliation and laying down his life for us, expressly proposed as an example unto us; Cant. iii. 10. John xv. 13. Eph. v. 2.

4. The eminent renewal of the old command of love, with such new enforcements that it is called 'a new commandment,' and peculiarly 'the law of Christ;' John. xiii. 34. xv. 12. 1 Thess. iv. 9. 2 John 5.

5. The state and condition of the persons between whom this duty is naturally to be exercised, as

(1.) Children of one father; Matt. xxiii. 8.

(2.) Members of one body; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.

(3.) Partakers of the same hope; Eph. iv. 4.

(4.) Objects of the same hate of the world; 1 John iii. 13.

6. The eminency of this grace.

(1.) In itself, and divine nature; Col. ii. 2. 1 John iv. 7. 1 Cor. xiii.

(2.) In its usefulness; Prov. x. 12. xv. 17. Gal. v. 13. Heb. xiii. 1.

(3.) In its acceptance with the saints; Eph. i. 15. Psal. v. 1 Cor. xiii.

7. The impossibility of performing any other duty without it; Gal. v. 6. 1 Thess. i. 3. 1 John iv. 20.

8. The great sin of want of love, with all its aggravations, Matt. xxiv. 12. 1 John iii. 14, 15. and the like, are so many, and of such various consideration as not now to be insisted on.

Love, which is the bond of communion, maketh out itself, and is peculiarly exercised in these things following.

Rule II. Continual prayer for the prosperous state of the church, in God's protection towards it.

Psal. cxxii. 6. 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.'

Phil. i. 4, 5. 'Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until *now*.'

Rom. i. 9. 'Without ceasing I make mention of you all in my prayer.'

Acts xii. 5. 'Peter was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.'

Isa. lxii. 6, 7. 'Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence. And give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.'

Eph. vi. 18. 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.'

Col. iv. 12. 'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.'

Explication II. Prayer, as it is the great engine whereby to prevail with the Almighty, Isa. xlv. 11. so it is the sure refuge of the saints at all times, both in their own behalf, Psal. lxi. 2. and also of others; Acts xii. 4. It is a benefit which the poorest believer may bestow, and the greatest potentate hath no power to refuse; this is the beaten way of the soul's communion with God, for which the saints have many gracious promises of assistance, Zech. xii. 10. Rom. viii. 26. innumerable precepts for performance, Matt. vii. 7. 1 Thess. v. 17. 1 Tim. ii. 8. with encouragements thereunto, James i. 5. Luke xi. 9. with precious promises of acceptance, Matt. xxi. 22. John xvi. 24. Psal. li. 15. By all which, and divers other ways, the Lord hath abundantly testified his delight in this sacrifice of his people. Now as the saints are bound to pray for all men, of what sort soever, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. unless they are such as sin unto death, 1 John v. 16. yea, for their persecutors, Matt. v. 44. and them that hold them in bondage, Jer. xxix. 7. so most especially for all saints, 1 Phil. i. 4. and peculiarly for those with whom they are in fellowship, Col. iv. 12. the Lord having promised, that 'upon every dwelling place, and all the assemblies of mount Zion,' that there shall be 'a cloud of smoke by day, and a shining of a flaming fire by night,' Isa. iv. 5. it is every one's duty to pray for its accomplishment. He is not worthy of the privileges of the church, who continues not in prayer for a defence upon that glory. Prayer then for the good, prosperity, flourishing, peace, increase, edification, and pro-

tection of the church, is a duty every day required of all the members thereof.

1. Estimation of the ordinances.
2. Concernment of God's glory.
3. The honour of Jesus Christ.
4. Our own benefit and spiritual interest.

With the expressness of the command, are sufficient motives hereunto.

Rule III. Earnest striving and contending in all lawful ways, by doing and suffering for the purity of the ordinances, honour, liberty, and privileges of the congregation, being jointly assistant against opposers and common adversaries.

Jude 3. 'And exhort you, that ye should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.'

Heb. xii. 3, 4. 'For consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds. Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.'

1 John iii. 16. 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'

Gal. v. 1. 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.'

Ver. 13. 'For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty.'

1 Cor. vii. 23. 'Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.'

Cant. vi. 4. 'Thou art beautiful, O my love, terrible as an army with banners.'

1 Pet. iii. 15. 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.'

Explication III. The former rule concerned our dealing with God, in the behalf of the church; this, our dealing with men; to the right performance hereof many things are required: as,

1. Diligent labouring in the word, with fervent prayer, to acquaint ourselves with the mind and will of God, concerning the way of worship which we profess, and the rules of walking, which we desire to practise, that so we may be able to give an account to humble inquirers, and stop the

mouths of stubborn opposers; according to our knowledge, such will be our valuation of the ordinances we enjoy: a man will not contend unless he knows his title.

2. An estimation of all the aspersions cast on, and injuries done to the church to be Christ's, and also our own; Christ wounded through the sides of his servants, and his ways; and if we are of his, though the blow light not immediately on us, we are not without pain: all such reproaches and rebukes fall on us.

3. Just vindication of the church against calumnies and false imputations; who can endure to hear his parents in the flesh falsely traduced? And shall we be senseless of her reproaches who bears us unto Christ?

4. Joint refusal of subjection, with all gospel opposition to any persons or things; who, contrary to, or besides the word, under what name soever, do labour for power over the church, to the abridging of it of any of those liberties and privileges which it claimeth as part of the purchase of Christ; to them that would enthral us, we are not to give place, no not for an hour.

Rule IV. Sedulous care and endeavouring for the preservation of unity, both in particular and in general.

Phil. ii. 1—3. 'If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.'

Eph. iv. 3, 4. 'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit,' &c.

1 Cor. i. 10. 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.'

2 Cor. xiii. 11. 'Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.'

Rom. xiv. 19. 'Let us therefore follow after the things

which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.'

Rom. xv. 5. 'Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another,' &c.

1 Cor. vi. 5—7. 'Is it so, that there is not a wise man amongst you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? but brother goeth to law with brother. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you.'

Acts iv. 32. 'And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.'

Explication IV. Union is the main aim and most proper fruit of love; neither is there any thing or duty of the saints in the gospel pressed with more earnestness and vehemency of exhortation than this. Now unity is threefold; first, Purely spiritual, by the participation of the same Spirit of grace; communication in the same Christ, one head to all. This we have with all the saints in the world, in what condition soever they be; yea, with those that are departed, sitting down in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Secondly, Ecclesiastical or church communion, in the participation of ordinances, according to the order of the gospel. This is a fruit and branch of the former; opposed to schism, divisions, rents, evil surmisings, self-practices, causeless differences in judgment in spiritual things concerning the kingdom of Christ, with whatsoever else goeth off from closeness of affection, oneness of mind, consent in judgment to the form of wholesome words, conformity of practice to the rule; and this is that which in the churches, and among them, is so earnestly pressed, commanded, desired, as the glory of Christ, the honour of the gospel, the joy and crown of the saints. Thirdly, Civil unity, or an agreement in things of this life, not contending with them, nor about them, every one seeking the welfare of each other. Striving is unseemly for brethren; why should they contend about the world who shall jointly judge the world?

Motives to the preservation of both these, are,

1. The remarkable earnestness of Christ and his apostles in their prayers for, and precepts of, this duty.

2. The certain dishonour of the Lord Jesus, scandal to the gospel, ruin to the churches, shame and sorrow to the

saints, that the neglect of it is accompanied withal; Gal. v. 15.

3. The gracious issues, and sweet heavenly consolation, which attendeth a right observance of them.

4. The many fearful aggravations wherewith the sin of rending the body of Christ, is attended.

5. The sad contempt and profanation of ordinances, which want of this hath brought upon many churches: for a right performance of this duty, we must,

(1.) Labour by prayer and faith, to have our hearts and spirits throughly seasoned with that affectionate love, which our first rule requireth.

(2.) Carefully observe in ourselves or others, the first beginnings of strife, which are as the letting out of waters, and if not prevented will make a breach like the sea.

(3.) Sedulously apply ourselves to the removal of the first appearance of divisions; and in case of not prevailing, to consult the church.

(4.) Daily to strike at the root of all dissention, by labouring for universal conformity to Jesus Christ.

Rule V. Separation and sequestration from the world and men of the world, with all ways of false worship, until we be apparently a people dwelling alone, not reckoned among the nations.

Numb. xxiii. 9. 'Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.'

John xv. 19. 'Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

2 Cor. vi. 14—16. 17, 18. 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Eph. v. 8. 'Walk as children of light:' ver. 11. 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.'

2 Tim. iii. 5. 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.'

Hosea iv. 15. 'Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven.'

Rev. xviii. 4. 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.'

Prov. xiv. 7. 'Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.'

Explication V. Separation generally hears ill in the world, and yet there is a separation suitable to the mind of God; he that will not separate from the world and false worship, is a separate from Christ.

Now the separation here commanded from any persons, is not in respect of natural affections, nor spiritual care of the good of their souls, Rom. ix. 3. nor yet in respect of duties of relation, 1 Cor. vii. 13. nor yet in offices of love and civil converse, 1 Cor. v. 10. 1 Thess. iv. 12. much less in not seeking their good and prosperity, 1 Tim. ii. 11. or not communicating good things unto them, Gal. vi. 10. or living profitably and peaceably with them; Rom. xii. 18. but in, 1. Manner of walking and conversation; Rom. xii. 2. Eph. iv. 17—19. 2. Delightful converse and familiarity where enmity and opposition appears; Eph. v. 3, 4. 6—8. 10, 11. 3. In way of worship, and ordinances of fellowship; Rev. xviii. 4. Not running out into the same compass of excess and riot with them, in any thing; for these three, and the like commands and discoveries of the will of God, are most express; as in the places annexed to the rule; necessity abundantly urgent, spiritual profit and edification, no less requiring it. Causeless separation from established churches, walking according to the order of the gospel (though perhaps failing in the practice of some things of small concernment), is no small sin; but separation from the sinful practices, and disorderly walkings, and false unwarranted ways of worship in any, is to fulfil the precept of not partaking in other men's sins; to delight in the company, fellowship, society, and converse of unsavoury, disorderly persons, proclaims a spirit not endeared to Christ.

Let motives *hereunto be,*

1. God's command.

2. Our own preservation from sin, and protection from punishment, that with others we be not infected and plagued.

3. Christ's delight in the purity of his ordinances.

4. His distinguishing love to his saints; provided, that in the practice of this rule, abundance of meekness, patience, gentleness, wisdom, and tenderness be exercised: let no offence be given justly to any.

Rule VI. Frequent spiritual communication, for edification according to gifts received.

Mal. iii. 16. 'Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.'

Job ii. 11. 'Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place: for they had made an appointment together, to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.'

Eph. iv. 29. 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace unto the hearers.'

Col. iv. 6. 'Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.'

Eph. v. 4. 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.'

1 Thess. v. 11. 'Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.'

Heb. iii. 13. 'Exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.'

Jude 20. 'Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.'

Heb. x. 24, 25. 'Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.'

Acts xviii. 26. 'Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had

heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.'

1 Cor. xii. 7. 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.'

Explication VI. That men not solemnly called and set apart to the office of public teaching, may yet be endued with useful gifts for edification, was before declared; the not using of such gifts, in an orderly way, according to the rule and custom of the churches, is to napkin up the talent given to trade and profit withal: that every man ought to labour, that he may walk and dwell in knowledge, in his family, none doubts; that we should also labour to do so in the church or family of God, is no less apparent.

This the Scriptures annexed to the rule declare, which in an especial manner hold out prayer, exhortation, instruction from the word, and consolation; now the performance of this duty of mutual edification, is incumbent on the saints.

1. Ordinarily, Eph. iv. 29. v. 3. 5. Heb. iii. 13. Believers in their ordinary daily converse, ought to be continually making mention of the Lord; with savoury discourses tending to edification, and not waste their opportunities with foolish, light, frothy speeches that are not convenient.

2. Occasionally, Luke xxiv. 14. Mal. iii. 1. 6. If any thing of weight and concernment to the church be brought forth by Providence, a spiritual improvement of it, by a due consideration amongst believers, is required.

3. By assembling of more together by appointment, for prayer and instruction from the word; Acts xviii. 23. xii. 12. Job ii. 11. Eph. v. 19. James v. 16. Jude 20. 1 Thess. xv. 14. This being a special ordinance and appointment of God, for the increasing of knowledge, love, charity, experience, and the improving of gifts received; every one contributing to the building of the tabernacle; let then all vain communication be far away. The time is short, and the days are evil; let it suffice us, that we have neglected so many precious opportunities of growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and doing good to one another; let the remainder of our few and evil days be spent in living to him who died for us; be not conformed to this world, nor the men thereof.

Rule VII. Mutually to bear with each other's infirmities, weakness, tenderness, failings, in meekness, patience, pity, and with assistance.

Eph. iv. 32. 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'

Matt. xviii. 21. 'Then came Peter to him, and said, How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? ver. 22. 'Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, seven times, but until seventy times seven.'

Mark xi. 25, 26. 'And when ye stand praying, forgive, if you have aught against any, that your Father which is also in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.'

Rom. xiv. 13. 'Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.' See ver. 3, 4.

Rom. xv. 1, 2. 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.'

1 Cor. xiii. 4—7. 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity is not rash, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'

Gal. vi. 1. 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'

Col. iii. 12—14. 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection.'

Explication VII. It is the glory of God to cover a mat-

ter; Prov. xxv. 2. free pardon is the substance of the gospel; the work of God in perfection, Isa. lv. proposed to us for imitation, Matt. viii. 26—28. Whilst we are clothed with flesh we do all things imperfectly; freedom from failings is a fruit of glory; we see here darkly as in a glass, know but in part, in many things we offend all; who knoweth how often? mutual failings to be borne with, offences to be pardoned, weakness to be supported, may mind us in these pence, of the talents forgiven us. Let him that is without fault throw stones at others. Some men rejoice in others' failings; they are malicious, and fail more in that sinful joy than their brethren in that which they rejoice at. Some are angry at weaknesses and infirmities; they are proud and conceited, not considering that they themselves also are in the flesh. Some delight to dwell always upon a frailty; they deserve to find no charity in the like kind. For injuries, who almost can bear until seven times? Peter thought it much. Some more study revenge than pardon; some pretend to forgive, but yet every slight offence makes a continued alienation of affections, and separation of converse. Some will carry a smooth face over a rough heart. Christ is in none of these ways; they have no savour of the gospel; meekness, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness, hiding, covering, removing of offences, are the footsteps of Christ: seest thou thy brother fail, pity him; doth he continue in it, earnestly pray for him, admonish him; cannot another sin, but you must sin too? If you be angry, vexed, rejoiced, alienated from, you are partner with him in evil, instead of helping him. Suppose thy God should be angry every time thou givest cause, and strike every time thou provokest him. When thy brother offendeth thee, do but stay thy heart, until thou takest a faithful view of the patience and forbearance of God towards thee; and then consider his command to thee, to go and do likewise. Let then all tenderness of affection, and bowels of compassion towards one another, be put on amongst us, as becometh saints. Let pity, not envy; mercy, not malice; patience, not passion; Christ, not flesh; grace, not nature; pardon, not spite or revenge, be our guides and companions in our conversations.

Motives hereunto are,

1. God's infinite mercy, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, and free grace towards us, sparing, pardoning, pitying, bearing with us, innumerable, daily, hourly failings and provocations; especially all this being proposed for our imitation, in our measure, Matt. x. 24. 28.

2. The goodness, unwearied and unchangeable love of the Lord Jesus Christ, putting in every day for us; not ceasing to plead in our behalf, notwithstanding our continual backsliding; 1 John ii. 1, 2.

3. The experience which our own hearts have of the need wherein we stand of others' patience, forbearance, and pardon; Eccles. vii. 20. 22.

4. The strictness of the command, with the threatenings attending its non-performance.

5. The great glory of the gospel, which is in the walking of the brethren with a right foot, as to this rule.

Rule VIII. Tender and affectionate participation with one another, in their several states and conditions, bearing each other's burdens.

Gal. vi. 2. 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'

Heb. xiii. 3. 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them that are in adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.'

1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. 'That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.'

2 Cor. xi. 29. 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?'

James i. 21. 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,' &c.

Matt. xxv. 35. 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' Ver. 40. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

2 Tim. i. 16, 17. 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of

Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.'

Acts xx. 35. 'I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak,' &c.

Explication VIII. The former rule concerned the carriage and frame of spirits towards our brethren in their failings: this is in their miseries and afflictions. In this also, conformity to Christ is required, who in all the afflictions of his people is afflicted, Isa. lxiii. 9. and persecuted in their distresses; Acts ix. 4. Could we bring up our spiritual union, to hold any proportion with the mutual union of many members in one body, to which it is frequently compared; this duty would be excellently performed. No man ever yet hated his own flesh: if one member be in pain, the rest have little comfort or ease; it is a rotten member which is not affected with the anguish of its companions. They are marked particularly for destruction, who in the midst of plentiful enjoyments, forget the miseries of their brethren; Amos vi. 6. If we will not feel the weight of our brethren's afflictions, burdens, and sorrow, it is a righteous thing that our own should be doubled; the desolations of the church makes Nehemiah grow pale in the court of a great king; Nehem. i. 10. They who are not concerned in the troubles, sorrows, visitations, wants, poverties, persecutions of the saints, not so far as to pity their woundings, to feel their strokes, to refresh their spirits, help bear their burdens upon their own shoulders, can never assure themselves, that they are united to the head of those saints. Now to a right performance of this duty, and in the discharge of it, are required,

1. A due valuation, strong desire, and high esteem of the church's prosperity in every member of it; Psal. cxxii. 6.

2. Bowels of compassion as a fruit of love, to be sensible of, and intimately moved for, the several burdens of the saints; Col. iii. 19.

3. Courage and boldness, to own them without shame in all conditions; 2 Tim. i. 16, 17.

4. Personal visitations in sicknesses, troubles, and restraints, to advise, comfort, and refresh them; Matt. xxv. 36.

5. Suitable supportment by administration of spiritual or temporal assistances, to the condition wherein they are. The motives are the same as to the former rule.

Rule IX. Free contribution, and communication of temporal things, to them that are poor indeed, suitable to their necessities, wants, and afflictions.

1 John iii. 17, 18. 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.'

1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. 'Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.'

2 Cor. ix. 5—7. 'Let your gift be ready as a matter of bounty, not covetousness; he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly. Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.' So the whole eighth and ninth chapters of this epistle.

Rom. xii. 13. 'Distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality.'

Gal. vi. 10. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.'

1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come.'

Heb. xiii. 16. 'To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'

Levit. xxv. 35. 'And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him.'

Matt. xxv. 34—36. 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and

ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' Ver. 40. 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

Explication IX. The having of poor always amongst us, and of us, according to our Saviour's prediction, Matt. xxvi. 11. and the promise of God, Deut. xv. 11. serves for the trial of themselves and others; of their own content, with Christ alone, with submission to the all-disposing sovereignty of God; of others, how freely they can part, for Christ's sake, with those things wherewith their hand is filled. When God gave manna for food unto his people, every one had an equal share, Exod. xvi. 18. 'and he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack;' 2 Cor. viii. 15. This distribution in equality was again, for the necessity of the church, reduced into practice in the days of the apostles; Acts iv. 35. Of the total sum of the possessions of believers, distribution was made to every man according to his need.

That every man, by the ordinance and appointment of God, hath a peculiar right to the use and disposal of the earthly things wherewith he is in particular intrusted, is unquestionable. The very precept for free distribution and communication, are enough to prove it; but that these things are altogether given to men for themselves and their own use, is denied; friends are to be made of mammon. Christ needs in some, what he bestows on others; if he hath given thee thine own and thy brother's portion also to keep, wilt thou be false to thy trust, and defraud thy brother? Christ being rich, became poor for our sakes; if he make us rich, it is that we may feed the poor for his sake; neither doth this duty lie only (though chiefly) on those who are greatly increased; those who have nothing but their labour, should spare out of that for those who cannot work; Eph. iv. 28. The two mites are required as well as accepted. Now the relief of the poor brethren in the church, hath a twofold rule.

First, Their necessity.

Secondly, Others' abilities.

Unto these two must assistance be proportioned; pro

vided that those which are poor walk suitably to their condition; 2 Thess. iii. 10, 11. And as we ought to relieve men in their poverty, so we ought, by all lawful means, to prevent their being poor: to keep a man from falling, is an equal mercy to the helping of him up when he is down.

Motives to this duty are,

1. The love of God unto us; 1 John iii. 14.

2. The glory of the gospel, exceedingly exalted thereby; Titus iii. 8. 15. Matt. v. 6.

3. The union whereunto we are brought in Christ, with the common inheritance promised to us all.

4. The testimony of the Lord Jesus, witnessing what is done in this kind, to be done unto himself; Matt. xxv. 35—37.

5. The promise annexed to it, Eccles. xi. 1. Prov. xix. 17. Deut. xv. 10. Matt. x. 42.

The way whereby it is to be done, is by appointing some, Acts vi. to take what is voluntarily distributed by the brethren, according as God hath blessed them, on the first day of the week, 1 Cor. xvi. 1. and to distribute to the necessity of the saints, according to the advice of the church; besides private distributions wherein we ought to abound; Matt. vi. 3. Heb. xiii. 16.

Rule X. To mark diligently, and avoid carefully, all causes and causers of divisions; especially to shun seducers, false teachers, and broachers of heresies and errors, contrary to the form of wholesome words.

Rom. xvi. 17, 18. 'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.'

Matt. xxiv. 4, 5. 'Jesus said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.' Ver. 23—25. 'Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.'

1 Tim. vi. 3—5. 'If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth: from such withdraw thyself.'

2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. 'But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker.'

Titus iii. 9, 10. 'But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.'

1 John ii. 18, 19. 'Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.'

1 John iv. 1. 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.'

2 John 10, 11. 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.'

Acts xx. 29. 'For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock:' ver. 30. 'Also of your ownselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them:' ver. 31. 'Therefore watch.'

Rev. ii. 14. 'I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.' Ver. 15, 16. 'So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I shall

come to thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.'

Explication X. The former part of this rule was something spoken to rule 4. If the preservation of unity ought to be our aim, then certainly the causes and causers of division ought to be avoided; 'from such turn away.' There is a generation of men, whose tongues seem to be acted by the devil; James calls it, 'Set on fire of hell;' chap. iii. 6. As though they were the mere offspring of serpents, they delight in nothing but in the fire of contention; disputing, quarrelling, backbiting, endless strivings, are that they live upon. 'Note such men, and avoid them.' Generally they are men of private interests, fleshly ends, high conceits, and proud spirits; 'from such turn away.' For the latter part of the rule in particular, concerning seducers, that a judgment of discerning by the spirit rests in the church, and the several members thereof, is apparent; 1 John ii. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 15. Isa. viii. 28. To the exercise of this duty they are commanded, John v. 1. 1 Cor. x. 5. so it is commended, Acts xvii. 11. and hereunto are they encouraged, Phil. i. 9, 10. Heb. v. 14. 'If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch:' that gold may be suspected, which would not be tried, Christians must choose the good and refuse the evil. If their teachers could excuse them, if they lead them aside, they might well require blind submission from them. Now that the brethren may exercise this duty aright, and perform obedience to this rule, it is required,

1. That they get their senses exercised in the word, to discern good and evil; Heb. v. 14. Especially, that they get from the Scripture a form of wholesome words, 2 Tim. i. 13. of the main truths of the gospel, and fundamental articles of religion; so that upon the first apprehension of the contrary, they may turn away from him that brings it, and not bid them God speed; 2 John 10.

2. That they attend and hearken to nothing but what comes to them in the way of God. Some men, yea, very many in our days, have such itching ears after novelty, that they run greedily after every one 'that lies in wait to deceive, with cunning enticing words,' to make out some new

pretended revelations; and this from a pretended liberty, yea, duty of trying all things; little considering that God will have his own work done, only in his own way. How they come it matters not, so they may be heard. Most of the seducers and false prophets of our days, are men apparently out of God's way, leaving their own callings to wander without a call, ordinary or extraordinary, without providence or promise; for a man to put himself voluntarily, uncalled, upon the hearing of them, is to tempt God, with whom it is just and righteous, to deliver them up to the efficacy of error, that they may believe the lies they hear. Attend only then to, and try only that which comes in the way of God; to others bid not God speed.

3. To be always ready furnished with, and to bear in mind the characters, which the Holy Ghost hath given us in the word, of seducers; which are indeed the very same, whereby poor unstable souls are seduced by them; as, first, That they should come in sheep's clothings, goodly pretences of innocency and holiness. Secondly, With good words and fair speeches, Rom. xvi. 17, 18. smooth as butter and oil. Thirdly, Answering men's lusts in their doctrine, 2 Tim. iv. 3. bringing doctrines suitable to some beloved lusts of men, especially a broad and easy way of salvation. Fourthly, Pretences of glorious discoveries and revelations; Matt. xxiv. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 2.

4. Utterly reject and separate from such as have had means of conviction and admonition; Tit. iii. 10.

5. Not to receive any without testimony from some of the brethren of known integrity in the churches: such is the misery of our days, that men will run to hear those, that they know not from whence they come, nor what they are; the laudable practice of the first churches, to give testimonials to them that were to pass from one place to another, 1 Cor. xvi. 3. and not to receive any without them, Acts ix. 26. is quite laid aside.

6. To walk orderly, not attending to the doctrine of any, not known to, and approved by, the churches.

7. To remove far away all delight in novelties, disputes, janglings, contentions about words not tending to godliness, which usually are beginnings of fearful apostacies; Tit. iii. 9. 2 Tim. *iv. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 3—5.*

Rule XI. Cheerfully to undergo the lot and portion of the whole church in prosperity and affliction, and not to draw back upon any occasion whatever.

Matt. xiii. 20, 21. 'But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.'

Heb. x. 23—25. 32—39. 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience; that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.'

2 Tim. iv. 10. 16. 'For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid unto their charge.'

Explication XI. Backsliding from the practice of any way of Christ, or use of any ordinances, taken up upon conviction of his institution, is in no small degree in apostacy from Christ himself.

Apostacy, in what degree soever, is attended with all *that aggravation* which a renunciation of a tasted sweetness

and goodness from God for transitory things, can lay upon it; seldom it is that backsliders are without pretences. Commonly of what they forsake, in respect of what they pretend to retain, they say, as Lot of Zoar, 'Is it not a little one?' But yet we see, without exception, that such things universally tend to more ungodliness: every unrecovered step backward, from any way of Christ, maketh a discovery of falseness in the heart, whatever former pretences have been.

They who, for motives of any sort, from things that are seen, which are but temporal, will seek for, or embrace being presented, colours or pretences for declining from any gospel duty, will not want them for the residue, if they should be tempted thereunto.

The beginnings of great evils are to be resisted. That the neglect of the duty whereof we treat, which is always accompanied with contempt of the communion of saints, hath been a main cause of the great dishonour and confusion whereunto most churches in the world are fallen, was in part touched before. It being a righteous thing with God, to suffer the sons of men to wax vain in their imaginations; in whom, neither the love of Christ, nor terror of the Lord, can prevail against the fear of men.

Let this, then, with the danger and abomination of backsliding, make such an impression on the hearts of the saints, 'that, with full purpose of heart they might cleave unto the Lord, follow hard after him,' in all his ordinances; that if persecution arise, they may cheerfully follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; and by their close adhering one to another, receive such mutual assistance and supportment, as that their joint prayers may prevail with the goodness of God, and their joint sufferings overcome the wickedness of men.

Now to a close adhering to the church wherein we walk in fellowship, in all conditions whatsoever, without dismission attained upon just and equitable grounds, for the embracing of communion in some other churches.

Motives are,

First, The eminency and excellency of the ordinances enjoyed.

Secondly, The danger of backsliding, and evidence of unsoundness in every degree thereof.

Thirdly, The scandal, confusion, and disorder of the churches, by neglect thereof.

Rule XII. In church affairs to make no difference of persons, but to condescend to the meanest persons and services, for the use of the brethren.

James ii. 1—6. 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assemblies, a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel; and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit here under my foot-stool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren; Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor,' &c.

Matt. xx. 26, 27. 'But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.'

Rom. xii. 16. 'Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.'

John xiii. 12—16. 'So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do even as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent, greater than him that sent him.'

Explication XII. Where the Lord hath not distinguished, neither ought we; in Jesus Christ there is neither rich nor poor, high nor low, but a new creature; generally, 'God

hath chosen the poor of this world to confound the mighty.'

Experience shews us, that not many great, not many wise, not many mighty after the flesh, are partakers of the heavenly calling; not that the gospel of Christ doth any way oppose, or take away those many differences and distinctions among the sons of men, caused by power, authority, relation, enjoyment of earthly blessings, gifts, age, or any other eminency whatsoever, according to the institution and appointment of God, with all that respect, reverence, duty, obedience, and subjection due unto persons in those distinctions; much less, pull up the ancient bounds of propriety and interest in earthly things; but only declares, that in things purely spiritual, these outward things, which for the most part happen alike unto all, are of no value or esteem: men in the church are considered as saints, and not as great, or rich; all are equal, all are naked before God.

Free grace is the only distinguisher, all being brethren in the same family, servants of the same master, employed about the same work, acted by the same precious faith, enjoying the same purchased privileges, expecting the same recompense of reward, and eternal abode. Whence should any difference arise? Let then the greatest account it their greatest honour, to perform the meanest necessary service to the meanest of the saints; a community in all spiritual advantages should give equality in spiritual affairs; not he that is richest, not he that is poorest, but he that is humblest, is accepted before the Lord.

Motives hereunto, are

1. Christ's example.
2. Scripture precepts.
3. God's not accepting persons.
4. Joint participation of the same common faith, hope, &c.
5. The unprofitableness of all causes of outward differences in things of God.

Rule XIII. If any be in distress, persecution, or affliction, the whole church is to be humbled, and to be earnest in prayer in their behalf.

Acts xii. 5. 7. 12. 'Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God *for him. And, behold, the* angel of the Lord came

upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together, praying.'

Rom. xii. 15. 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.'

1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. 'And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.'

2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. 'Pray for us, brethren, that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.'

Explication XIII. This duty being in general made out from, and included in, other former rules, we shall need to speak the less unto it; especially, seeing that upon consideration and supposition of our fellow-membership, it is no more than very nature requireth and calleth for. God delighteth, as in the thankful praises, so in the fervent prayers of his churches; therefore he variously calleth them by several dispensations to the performance of these duties. Now this oft-times, to spare the whole church, he doth by the afflictions of some one or other of the members thereof; knowing that, that near relation, which by his institution and Spirit is between them, will make the distress common, and their prayers closely combined. Spiritual union is more noble and excellent than natural; and yet in this it were monstrous, that either any member in particular, or the whole in general, should not both suffer with, and care for, the distress of every part and member. That member is rotten and to be cut off, for fear of infecting the body, which feels not the pains of its associates. If then any member of the church, do lie under the immediate afflicting hand of God, or the prosecuting rage of man, it is the duty of every fellow-member, and of the church in general, to be sensible of, and account themselves so sharers therein, as to be instant with God by earnest supplication, and helpful to them by suitable assistance, that their spiritual concernment in that affliction, may be apparent; and that because, first, The will of God is thereby fulfilled. *Secondly, The glory* of the gospel is thereby exalted. Thirdly,

Preservation and deliverance to the whole church procured. Fourthly, Conformity with Christ's sufferings in his saints attained. Fifthly, An inestimable benefit of church fellowship enjoyed, &c.

Rule XIV. Vigilant watchfulness over each other's conversation, attended with mutual admonition, in case of disorderly walking; with rendering an account to the church, if the party offending be not prevailed with.

Matt. xviii. 15—17. 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.'

1 Thess. v. 14. 'Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly.'

Heb. iii. 12, 13. 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.'

Heb. x. 24, 25. 'And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.'

Heb. xii. 13.15, 16. 'Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather let it be healed. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of bread, sold his birthright.'

Lev. xix. 17. 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.'

2 Thess. iii. 15. 'Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.'

Rom. xv. 14. 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.'

James v. 19, 20. '*Brethren, if* any of you do err from the

truth, an d one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'

Prov. xxix. 1. 'He that being often reproved stiffeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

Explication XIV. There is a threefold duty included in this rule, the main whereof, and here chiefly intended, is that of admonition, whereunto the first is previous and conducing; the latter, in some cases consequent, and attending Christians' conversation: whether you consider the glory of God, and the gospel therein concerned; or the bonds of relation, with those mutual endearments wherein they stand engaged; and obligations that are upon them for the general good and spiritual edification one of another, this duty is of eminent necessity and usefulness. Not that we should curiously pry into one another's failings; much less maliciously search into doubtful unknown things, for the trouble or disparagement of our brethren; both which are contrary to that love which thinketh not evil, but covereth a multitude of faults; but only out of a sense of the glory of God, the honour of the gospel, and care of each other's souls: we are to observe their walking, that what is exemplary therein may be followed, what faileth may be directed, what is amiss may be reproved, that in all things God may be glorified, and Christ exalted.

Now admonition is twofold: 1. Authoritative, by the way of power; 2. Fraternal, by the way of love. The first again is twofold; (1.) Doctrinal, by the way of teaching; (2.) Disciplinary, which belongeth to the whole church; of these we do not treat. The latter also is twofold: hortatory, to encourage unto good; and monitory, to reprove that which is amiss: it is this last which is peculiarly aimed at, and intended in the rule. This then we assert, as the duty of every church member towards them with whom he walks in fellowship; to admonish any from the word, whom they perceive not walking in any thing with a right foot, as becometh the gospel, thereby to recover his soul to the right way, that much caution and wisdom, tenderness and moderation is required in the persons performing this duty; for want *whereof*, it often degenerates from a peaceable remedy of

evil, into fuel, for strife and debate is granted. Let them, then, who are called to perform this duty, diligently consider these things: 1. That in the whole action he transgress not that rule of charity which we have, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Gal vi. 2. Let him have peace at home, by an assurance of constant labouring to cast out all beams and motes from his own eye; Matt. vii. 5. 3. Let him so perform it, that it may evidently appear, that he hath no other aim but the glory of God, and the good of his brother reproved; all envy and rejoicing in evil being far away. 4. Let him be sure to draw his admonitions from the word, that the authority of God may appear therein, and without a word let him not presume to speak. 5. Let all circumstances attending time, place, persons, and the like, be duly weighed, that all provocation in the least manner, may be fully avoided. 6. Let it be considered as an ordinance whereunto Christ hath an especial regard. 7. Let him carefully distinguish between personal injuries unto himself, whose mention must have far more of forgiveness than reproof, and other offences tending to public scandal. Lastly, Let self-examination concerning the same or the like miscarriage, always accompany the brotherly admonition.

These and the like things being duly weighed, let every brother, with Christian courage, admonish from the word, every one whom he judgeth to walk disorderly in any particular whatsoever; not to suffer sin upon him, being ready to receive content and satisfaction upon just defence, or promised amendment: and without this, in case of just offence, a man cannot be freed from the guilt of other men's sins. Let also the person admonished, with all Christian patience, accept of the admonition, without any more regret of spirit, than he would have against him who should break the weapon wherewith he was in danger to be slain: considering,

1. The authority of him who hath appointed it.

2. The privilege and mercy he enjoyeth by such a spiritual prevention of such a danger, or out of such an evil, which perhaps himself did not discern.

3. The dreadful judgments which are everywhere threatened to despisers of reproofs, Prov. xxix. 1. and so thankfully accept just admonition from the meanest in the congregation.

For the last, or repairing unto the church in case of not prevailing by private admonition; our Saviour hath so plainly laid down both the manner and end of proceeding in Matt. xviii. that it needeth no explanation; only I shall observe, that by church there, ver. 17. cannot be understood the elders of the church alone, but rather the whole congregation; for if the offended brother should take with him two or three of the elders unto the offender, as he may, then were they the church, and the church should be told of the offence before the reproof hath been managed by two or three, which is contrary to the rule.

Rule XV. Exemplary walking in all holiness and godliness of conversation, to the glory of the gospel, edification of the church, and conviction of them which are without.

Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Matt. v. 16. 20. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

Matt. xxi. 19. 'And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever,' &c.

2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

2 Tim. ii. 19. 'And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.' Tit. ii. 11, 12, 14. 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Eph. iv. 21—23. 'If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former

conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.' 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. 'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.' Heb. xii. 14. 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' Eph. v. 15. 16. 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' 2 Sam. xii. 14. 'Howbeit because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee, shall surely die.'

Explication XV. Holiness becometh the house of the Lord for ever, without it none shall see God. Christ died to wash his church, to present it before his Father without spot or blemish, to purchase unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It is the kingdom of God within us, and by which it appeareth unto all that we are the children of the kingdom. Let this then be the great discriminating character of the church from the world, that they are a holy, humble, self-denying people: our Master is holy, his doctrine and worship holy; let us strive that our hearts may also be holy.

This is our wisdom towards them that are without, whereby they may be guided, or convinced; this is the means whereby we build up one another most effectually. Examples are a sharper way of instruction than precepts; loose walking causing the name of God to be blasphemed, the little ones of Christ to be offended, and his enemies to rejoice, is attended with most dreadful woes. Oh, that all who are called to a holy profession, and do enjoy holy ordinances, did shine also in holiness of conversation, that those who accuse them as evil doers, might have their mouths stopped, and their hearts filled with shame, to the glory of the gospel! To this general head belongeth wise walking in all patience, meekness, and long-suffering towards those that are without, until they evidently appear to be fighters against God; when they are to be prayed for. Hither also might be referred the patience of the saints in all tribulations, sufferings, and persecutions *for the name of* Christ.

Motives for the exercise of universal holiness in acts internal and external, private and public, personal and of all relations, are

1. The utter insufficiency of the most precious ordinances, for any communion with God, without it.

2. The miserable issue of deceived souls, with their barren, empty, fruitless faith.

3. The glory of the gospel, when the power thereof hath an evident impression on the hearts, thoughts, words, actions, and lives of professors.

4. Scandal of the gospel, the advantage of its adversaries, the shame of the church and fierce wrath of God, following the unsuitable walking of the professors.

5. The sweet reward which the practice of holiness bringeth along with it, even in this life; with that eternal weight of glory, whereunto it leadeth hereafter; unto which the holy Son of God bring us all, through the sprinkling of his most holy blood.

And these are some of those rules, whose practice is required from the persons, and adorneth the profession of those who have obtained this grace, to walk together in fellowship, according to the rule of the gospel; towards others also ought they, with several limitations, and in the full latitude towards the brethren of the congregations in communion with them to be observed.

OF

SCHISM;

THE TRUE NATURE OF IT,

DISCOVERED AND CONSIDERED,

WITH REFERENCE

TO THE PRESENT DIFFERENCES IN RELIGION.

OF

SCHISM.

CHAP. I.

Aggravations of the evil of schism, from the authority of the ancients. Their incompetency to determine in this case, instanced in the sayings of Austin and Jerome. The saying of Aristides. Judgment of the ancients subjected to disquisition. Some men's advantage in charging others with schism. The actors' part privileged. The Romanists' interest herein. The charge of schism not to be despised. The iniquity of accusers justifies not the accused. Several persons charged with schism on several accounts. The design of this discourse in reference to them. Justification of differences unpleasant. Attempts for peace and reconciliation considered. Several persuasions hereabouts, and endeavours of men to that end. Their issues.

It is the manner of men of all persuasions, who undertake to treat of schism, to make their entrance with invectives against the evils thereof, with aggravations of its heinousness. All men, whether intending the charge of others, or their own acquitment, esteem themselves concerned so to do. Sentences out of the fathers, and determinations of schoolmen, making it the greatest sin imaginable, are usually produced to this purpose. A course this is which men's apprehensions have rendered useful, and the state of things in former days easy. Indeed whole volumes of the ancients, written when they were actors in this cause, charging others with the guilt of it, and consequently with the vehemency of men contending for that wherein their own interest lay, might (if it were to our purpose) be transcribed to this end. But as they had the happiness to deal with men evidently guilty of many miscarriages, and for the most part absurd and foolish, so many of them having fallen upon such a notion of the catholic church and schism, as hath given occasion to many woful mistakes, and much darkness in the *following ages, I cannot* so easily give up the nature of this

evil to their determination and judgment. About the aggravations of its sinfulness I shall not contend.

The evidence which remains of an indulgence in the best of them, τῇ ἀμετρία τῆς ἀνθολκῆς in this business especially, deters from that procedure. From what other principle were those words of Augustine; 'Obscurius dixerunt prophetæ de Christo quam de ecclesia: puto propterea quia videbant in spiritu contra ecclesiam homines facturos esse particulas: et de Christo non tantam litem habituros, de ecclesia magnas contentiones excitaturos.' Conc. 2. ad Psal. xxx. Neither the affirmation itself, nor the reason assigned, can have any better root. Is any thing more clearly and fully prophesied on than Christ? or was it possible that good men should forget with what contests the whole church of God all the world over had been exercised from its infancy about the person of Christ? Shall the tumultuating of a few in a corner of Africa, blot out the remembrance of the late diffusion of Arianism over the world? But Jerome hath given a rule for the interpretation of what they delivered in their polemical engagements; telling us plainly in his Apology for himself to Pammachius, that he had not so much regarded what was exactly to be spoken in the controversy he had in hand, as what was fit to lay load upon Jovinian. And if we may believe him, this was the manner of all men in those days. If they were engaged, they did not what the truth only, but what the defence of their cause also required. Though I believe him not as to all he mentions, yet doubtless we may say to many of them, as the apostle in another case, Ὅλως ἥττημα ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστιν. Though Aristides obtained the name of Just, for his uprightness in the management of his own private affairs, yet being engaged in the administration of those of the commonwealth, he did many things professedly unjust; giving this reason, he did them Πρὸς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τῆς πατρίδος συχνῆς ἀδικίας δεομένης.

Besides, the age wherein we live having, by virtue of that precept of our Saviour, 'Call no man master,' in a good measure freed itself from the bondage of subjection to the dictates of men (and the innumerable evils with endless entanglements thence ensuing), because they lived so many *hundreds of years* before us; that course of procedure,

ough retaining its facility, hath lost its usefulness, and is nfessedly impertinent. What the Scripture expressly ith of this sin, and what from that it saith may regularly d rationally be deduced (whereunto we stand and fall), all be afterward declared. And what is spoken suitably ereunto by any of old, or of late, shall be cheerfully also ceived. But it may not be expected that I should build pon their authority, whose principles I shall be necessiated to examine. And I am therefore contented to lie low, s to any expectation of success in my present undertaking, ecause I have the prejudice of many ages, the interest of ost Christians, and the mutual consent of parties at variance (which commonly is taken for an unquestionable vidence of truth) to contend withal. But my endeavours being to go, 'non qua itur, sed qua eundum est,' I am not olicitous about the event.

In dealing about this business among Christians, the advantage hath been extremely hitherto on their part, who found it their interest to begin the charge. For whereas perhaps themselves were, and are of all men most guilty of the crime; yet, by their clamorous accusation, putting others upon the defence of themselves, they have in a manner clearly escaped from the trial of their own guilt, and cast the issue of the question purely on them whom they have accused. The actors or complainants' part was so privileged by some laws and customs, that he who had desperately wounded another, chose rather to enter against him the frivolous plea, that he received not his whole sword into his body, than to stand to his best defence, on the complaint of the wounded man. An accusation managed with the craft of men guilty, and a confidence becoming men wronged and innocent, is not every one's work to slight and wave. And he is in ordinary judgments immediately acquitted, who avers that his charge is but recrimination. What advantage the Romanists have had on this account, how they have expatiated in the aggravation of the sin of schism, whilst they have kept others on the defence, and would fain make the only thing in question to be, whether they are guilty of it or no, is known to all. And therefore, ever since they have been convinced of their disability to debate the things in *difference* between them and us, unto

any advantage from the Scripture, they have almost wholly insisted on this one business, wherein they would have it wisely thought, that our concernment only comes to the trial, knowing that in these things their defence is weak, who have nothing else. Nor do they need any other advantage; for if any party of men can estate themselves at large in all the privileges granted, and promises made to the church in general, they need not be solicitous about dealing with them that oppose them; having at once rendered them no better than Jews and Mahometans,[a] heathens or publicans, by appropriating the privileges mentioned unto themselves. And whereas the parties litigant, by all rules of law and equity, ought to stand under an equal regard, until the severals of their differences have been heard and stated; one party is hereby utterly condemned before it is heard; and it is all one unto them, whether they are in the right or wrong. But we may possibly in the issue state it upon another foot of account.

In the mean time it cannot be denied, but that their vigorous adhering to the advantage which they have made to themselves (a thing to be expected from men wise in their generation), hath exposed some of them, whom they have wrongfully accused, to a contrary evil; whilst in a sense of their own innocency, they have insensibly slipped (as is the manner of men) into slight and contemptible thoughts of the thing itself whereof they are accused. Where the thing in question is but a name or term of reproach, invented amongst men, this is incomparably the best way of defence. But this contains a crime; and no man is to set light by it. To live in schism, is to live in sin; which, unrepented of, will ruin a man's eternal condition: every one charged with it must either desert his station, which gives foundation to his charge, or acquit himself of the crime, in that station. This latter is that, which in reference to myself and others, I do propose: assenting in the gross to all the aggravations of this sin, that with any pretence from Scripture or reason are heaped on it.

And I would beg of men fearing God, that they would

[a] Solis nosse Deos et Cœli numina vobis——
——aut solis nescire datum.

not think, that the iniquity of their accusers doth in the least extenuate the crime whereof they are accused. Schism is schism still, though they may be unjustly charged with it; and he that will defend and satisfy himself by prejudices against them with whom he hath to do, though he may be no schismatic, yet if he were so, it is certain he would justify himself in his state and condition. Seeing men on false grounds and self-interest may yet sometimes manage a good cause, which perhaps they have embraced upon better principles, a conscientious tenderness and fear of being mistaken, will drive this business to another issue. 'Blessed is he who feareth always.'

It is well known how things stand with us in this world; as we are Protestants we are accused by the Papists to be schismatics. And all other pleas and disputes neglected, this is that which at present (as is evident from their many late treatises on this subject, full of their wonted confidence, contempt, reviling, and scurrility) is chiefly insisted on by them.

Farther, among Protestants, as being reformatists, or as they call us Calvinists, we are condemned for schismatics by the Lutherans; and for sacramentarian sectaries, for no other crime in the world, but because we submit not to all they teach; for in no instituted church relation would they ever admit us to stand with them; which is as considerable an instance of the power of prejudice, as this age can give. We are condemned for separation, by them who refuse to admit us into union. But what hath not an irrational attempt of enthroning opinions put men upon?

The differences nearer home about episcopal government, with the matter of fact, in the rejecting of it, and somewhat of the external way of the worship of God formerly used amongst us, hath given occasion to a new charge of the guilt of the same crime on some; as it is not to be supposed, that wise and able men, suffering to a great extremity, will oversee or omit any thing, from whence they may hope to prevail themselves against those, by whose means they think they suffer. It cannot be helped, the engagement being past, but this account must be carried on one step farther. Amongst them who in these late days have engaged, as they profess, into reformation (and not to believe that to have been their in-

tention is fit only for them, who are concerned, that it should be thought to be otherwise, whose prejudice may furnish them with a contrary persuasion), not walking all in the same light as to some few particulars, whilst each party, as the manner is, gathered together what they thought conduced to the furtherance and improvement of the way wherein they differed one from another, some unhappily to the heightening of the differences, took up this charge of schism against their brethren; which yet, in a small process of time, being almost sunk of itself, will ask the less pains utterly to remove and take off. In the mean time, it is amongst other things (which is to be confessed) an evidence that we are not yet arrived at that inward frame of spirit, which was aimed at Phil. iii. 15, 16. whatever we have attained as to the outward administration of ordinances.

This being the state of things, the concernment of some of us lying in all the particulars mentioned, of all Protestants in some, it may be worth while to consider, whether there be not general principles of irrefragable evidence, whereon both all and some may be acquitted from their several concernments in this charge, and the whole guilt of this crime put into the ephah, and carried to build it a house in the land of Shinar, to establish it upon its own base.

I confess I would rather, much rather, spend all my time and days in making up and healing the breaches and schisms that are amongst Christians, than one hour in justifying our divisions, even therein, wherein on the one side they are capable of a fair defence. But who is sufficient for such an attempt? The closing of differences amongst Christians is like opening the book in the Revelation: there is none able or worthy to do it in heaven or in earth, but the Lamb: when he will put forth the greatness of his power for it, it shall be accomplished, and not before. In the mean time a reconciliation amongst all Protestants is our duty, and practicable; and had perhaps ere this been in some forwardness of accomplishment, had men rightly understood, wherein such a reconciliation according to the mind of God doth consist. When men have laboured as much in the improvement of the principle of forbearance, as they have done to subdue other men to their opinions, religion will have another appearance in the world.

I have considered and endeavoured to search into the bottom of the two general ways fixed on respectively by sundry persons, for the compassing of peace and union among Christians, but in one nation, with the issue and success of them in several places; namely, that of enforcing uniformity by a secular power on the one side, as was the case in this nation not many years ago (and is yet liked by the most, being a suitable judgment for the most), and that of toleration on the other, which is our present condition. Concerning them both I dare say, that though men of a good zeal, and small experience, or otherwise on any account full of their own apprehensions, may promise to themselves much of peace, union, and love, from the one or the other (as they may be severally favoured by men of different interests in this world, in respect of their conducingness to their ends), yet that a little observation of events, if they are not able to consider the causes of things, with the light and posture of the minds of men in this generation, will unburden them of the trouble of their expectations. It is something else that must give peace unto Christians than what is a product of the prudential considerations of men.

This I shall only add as to the former of these, of enforcing uniformity; as it hath lost its reputation of giving temporal tranquillity to states, kingdoms, and commonwealths (which with some is only valuable, whatever became of the souls of men, forced to the profession of that which they did not believe) the readiest means in the world to root out all religion from the hearts of men, the letters of which plea are in most nations in Europe washed out with rivers of blood (and the residue wait their season for the same issue), so it continues in the possession of this advantage against the other, that it sees, and openly complains of the evil, and dangerous consequences of it; when against its own, where it prevails, it suffers no complaints to lie. As it is ludicrously said of physicians, the effects of their skill lie in the sun, but their mistakes are covered in the church-yard: so is it with this persuasion; what it doth well, whilst it prevails, is evident: the anxiety of conscience in some, hypocrisy, formality, no better then atheism in others, wherewith it is attended, are buried out of sight.

But as I have some while since ceased to be moved by

the clamours of men, concerning bloody persecution on the one hand, and cursed, intolerable toleration on the other, by finding all the world over, that events and executions follow not the conscientious embracing of the one or other of these decried principles and persuasions, but are suited to the providence of God, stating the civil interests of the nations; so I am persuaded, that a general alteration of the state of the churches of Christ in this world, must determine that controversy: which, when the light of it appears, we shall easily see the vanity of those reasonings wherewith men are entangled, and are perfectly suited to the present condition of religion. But hereof I have spoken elsewhere.

Farther, let any man consider the proposals and attempts that have been made for ecclesiastical peace in the world, both of old, and in these latter days; let him consult the rescripts of princes, the edicts of nations, advices of politicians, that would have the world in quietness on any terms, consultations, conferences, debates, assemblies, councils of the clergy, who are commonly zealots in their several ways, and are by many thought to be willing rather to hurl the whole world into confusion than to abate any thing of the rigour of their opinions, and he will quickly assume the liberty of affirming concerning them all, that as wise men might easily see flaws in all of them, and an unsuitableness to the end proposed, and as good men might see so much of carnal interest, self, and hypocrisy in them, as might discourage them from any great expectations; so, upon many other accounts, a better issue was not to be looked for from them, than hath been actually obtained; which hath for the most part been this, that those that could dissemble most deeply, have been thought to have the greatest advantage. In disputations, indeed, the truth for the most part hath been a gainer; but in attempts for reconciliation, those who have come with the least candour, most fraud, hypocrisy, secular baits for the subverting of others, have in appearance for a season seemed to obtain success. And in this spirit of craft and contention are things yet carried on in the world.

Yea, I suppose the parties at variance are so well acquainted at length with each other's principles, arguments, interests, prejudices, and real distance of their causes, that none of them expect any reconciliation, but merely by

one party's keeping its station, and the other coming over wholly thereunto. And therefore a Romanist, in his preface to a late pamphlet about schism to the two univerities, tells us plainly, that, 'If we will have any peace, we must without limitation submit to, and receive those κυρίας δόξας, those commanding oracles which God by his holy spouse propoundeth to our obedience.' The sense of which expressions we are full well acquainted with. And in pursuit of that principle he tells us again, p. 238. 'That suppose the church should in necessary points teach error, yet even in that case every child of the church must exteriorly carry himself quiet, and not make commotions' (that is, declare against her) 'for that were to seek a cure worse than the disease.' Now if it seem reasonable to these gentlemen, that we should renounce our sense and reason, with all that understanding which we have, or at least are fully convinced that we have, of the mind of God in the Scripture, and submit blindly to the commands and guidance of their church, that we may have peace and union with them, because of their huge interest and advantage, which lies in our so doing, we profess ourselves to be invincibly concluded under the power of a contrary persuasion, and consequently an impossibility of reconciliation.

As to attempts then for reconciliation between parties at variance about the things of God, and the removal of schism by that means, they are come to this issue among them, by whom they have been usually managed, namely, politicians and divines; that the former perceiving the tenaciousness in all things of the latter, their promptness and readiness to dispute, and to continue in so doing with confidence of success (a frame of spirit that indeed will never praise God, nor be useful to bring forth truth in the world), do judge them at length not to have that prudence, which is requisite to advise in matters diffused into such variety of concernments as these are, or not able to break through their unspeakable prejudices and interests to the due improvement of that wisdom they seem to have; and the latter observing the facile condescension of the former in all things that may have a consistency with that peace and secular advantage they aim at, do conclude, that, notwithstanding all their pretences, they have *indeed, in such* consultations, little or no

regard to the truth; whereupon, having a mutual diffidence in each other, they grow weary of all endeavours to be carried on jointly in this kind; the one betaking themselves wholly to keep things in as good state in the world as they can, let what will become of religion; the other to labour for success against their adversaries, let what will become of the world, or the peace thereof. And this is like to be the state of things, until another spirit be poured out on the professors of Christianity, than that wherewith at present they seem mostly to be acted.

The only course then remaining to be fixed on, whilst our divisions continue, is to inquire wherein the guilt of them doth consist, and who is justly charged therewith; in especial what is, and who is guilty of the sin of schism. And this shall we do, if God permit.

It may, I confess, seem superfluous to add any thing more on this subject, which hath been so fully already handled by others. But, as I said, the present concernment of some fearing God, lying beyond what they have undertaken, and their endeavours for the most part having tended rather to convince their adversaries of the insufficiency of their charge and accusation, than rightly and clearly to state the thing or matter contended about, something may be farther added as to the satisfaction of the consciences of men unjustly accused of this crime, which is my aim, and which I shall now fall upon.

CHAP. II.

The nature of schism to be determined from Scripture only. This principle by some opposed. Necessity of abiding in it. Parity of reason allowed. Of the name of schism. Its constant use in Scripture. In things civil and religious. The whole doctrine of schism in the epistles to the Corinthians. The case of that church proposed to consideration. Schism entirely in one church. Not in the separation of any from a church; nor in subtraction of obedience from governors. Of the second schism in the church of Corinth. Of Clemens's epistle. The state of the church of Corinth in those days: Ἐκκλησία παροικοῦσα Κόρινθον. Πάροικος who: παροικία what. Πάροχος, 'paracia.' To whom the epistle of Clemens was precisely written. Corinth not a metropolitical church. Allowance of what by parity of reason may be deduced from what is of schism affirmed. Things required to make a man guilty of schism. Arbitrary definitions of schism rejected. That of Austin considered: as that also of Basil. The common use and acceptation of it in these days. Separation from any church in its own nature not schism. Aggravations of the evil of schism ungrounded. The evil of it from its proper nature and consequences evinced. Inferences from the whole of this discourse. The church of Rome, if a church, the most schismatical church in the world. The church of Rome no church of Christ: a complete image of the empire. Final acquitment of Protestants from schism on the principle evinced. Peculiarly of them of the late reformation in England. False notions of schism the ground of sin and disorder.

The thing whereof we treat being a disorder in the instituted worship of God, and that which is of pure revelation, I suppose it a modest request to desire, that we may abide solely to that discovery and description, which is made of it in Scripture; that, that alone shall be esteemed schism, which is there so called, or which hath the entire nature of that which is there so called; other things may be other crimes; schism they are not, if in the Scripture they have neither the name nor nature of it attributed to them.

He that shall consider the irreconcilable differences that are among Christians all the world over about this matter, as also what hath passed concerning it in former ages, and shall weigh what prejudices the several parties at variance are entangled with, in reference hereunto, will be ready to think, that this naked appeal to the only common principle amongst us all, is so just, necessary, and reasonable, that it will be *readily on all hands* condescended unto. But as this

is openly opposed by the Papists, as a most destructive way of procedure, so I fear, that when the tendency of it is discovered, it will meet with reluctancy from others. But let the reader know, that as I have determined *πρωτιμᾶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, so to take the measure of it from the Scripture only, 'Consuetudo sine veritate est vetustas erroris;' Cyp. Ep. ad Pomp. and the sole measure of evangelical truth, is his word, of whom it was said, *ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστι.* 'Id verius quod prius, id prius quod ab initio, id ab initio quod ab apostolis,' says Tertul. It is to me a sufficient answer to that fond question, Where was your religion before Luther? Where was your religion in the days of Christ and his apostles? My thoughts to this particular are the same with Chrysostom's on the general account of truth, *Ἔρχεται Ἕλλην καὶ λέγει, ὅτι βούλομαι γενέσθαι Χριστιάνος ἀλλὰ οὐκ οἶδα τίνι προσθῶμαι, μάχη παρ' ὑμῖν πολλὴ καὶ στάσις, πολὺς θόρυβος, ποῖον ἕλομαι δόγμα; τὶ αἱρήσομαι; ἕκαστος λέγει ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀληθεύω, τίνι πειθῶ; μηδὲν ὅλως εἰδὼς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς κακεῖν τὸ αὐτὸ προβάλλονται πάνυ γε τοῦτο ὑπερ ἡμῶν εἰ μὲν γὰρ λογισμοῖς ἐλέγομεν πείθεσθαι εἰκότως ἐθορύβου εἰ δὲ ταῖς γραφαῖς λέγομεν πιστεύειν αὐταὶ δὲ ἁπλαὶ καὶ ἀληθεῖς; εὔκολον σοι τὸ κρινόμενον, εἴτις ἐκείναις συμφωνεῖ οὗτος χριστιάνος· εἴτις μάχεται οὗτος πόῤῥω τοῦ κανόνος τούτου.* Homil. 3. in Acta.

But yet lest this should seem too strait, as being at first view exclusive of the learned debates and disputes which we have had about this matter, I shall, after the consideration of the precise Scripture notion of the name and thing wherein the conscience of a believer is alone concerned, propose and argue also what by a parity of reason may thence be deduced, as to the ecclesiastical common use of them, and our concernment in the one and the other.

The word which is metaphorical, as to the business we have in hand, is used in the Scripture, both in its primitive native sense, in referrence to things natural, as also in the tralatitious use of it about things politic and spiritual, or moral. In its first sense we have the noun, Matt. ix. 16. *Καὶ χεῖρον σχίσμα γίνεται,* 'and the rent' (in the cloth) 'is made worse:' and the verb, Matt. xxvii. 51. *Καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη,* 'the vail of the temple was rent;' *καὶ αἱ πέτραι ἐσχίσθησαν,* 'and the rocks were rent:' both denoting an interruption *of continuity* by an external power in things merely passive.

And this is the first sense of the word; a scissure or division of parts before continued, by force, or violent dissolution. The use of the word in a political sense is also frequent: John vii. 43. Σχίσμα οὖν ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ, 'there was a division among the multitude;' some being of one mind, some of another. John ix. 16. Καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς, 'there was a division amongst them: and chap. x. 19. likewise. So Acts xiv. 4. Ἐσχίσθη δε τὸ πλῆθος τῆς πόλεως, 'the multitude of the city was divided:' and chap. xxiii. 7. 'There arose a dissention between the Pharisees and Sadducees.' Καὶ ἐσχίσθη τὸ πλῆθος, 'the multitude was divided,' some following one, some another of their leaders in that dissention: the same thing is expressed by a word answering unto it in Latin.

'Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus.' And in this sense relating to civil things it is often used.[a]

This being the next posture of that word, from whence it immediately slips into its ecclesiastical use, expressing a thing moral or spiritual; there may some light be given into its importance, when so appropriated, from its constant use in this state and condition, to denote differences of mind and judgment with troubles ensuing thereon, amongst men met in some one assembly about the compassing of a common end and design.

In the sense contended about it is used only by Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, and therein frequently: chap. i. 10. I exhort you, μὴ ᾖ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, 'that there be no schisms amongst you:' chap. xi. 18. when you meet in the church, ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν, 'I hear there be schisms amongst you:' chap. xii. 25. the word is used in reference to the natural body, but with an application to the ecclesiastical. Other words there are of the same importance, which shall also be considered, as Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Of schism in any other place, or in reference to any other persons, but only to this church of Corinth, we hear nothing.

Here then being the principal foundation, if it hath any, of that great fabric about schism, which in latter ages hath been set up, it must be duly considered; that if it be possible, we may discover by what secret engines or artifices the discourses about it, which fill the world, have been hence

[a] Οἳ τὴν ῥώμην οἰκουντες διέμερίσθησαν εἰς τὰ μέρη, καὶ οὐκέτι ὡμονόησαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους. καὶ ἐγένετο μέγα σχίσμα. Chronic. Antioch. Joh. Male, p. 98. A. MS. Bib. Bod.

deduced, being for the most part, universally unlike the thing here mentioned: or find out, that they are built on certain prejudices and presumptions, nothing relating thereto. The church of Corinth was founded by Paul, Acts xviii. 8—10. with him there were Aquila and Priscilla; ver. 2. 18. After his departure, Apollos came thither, and effectually watered what he had planted, 1 Cor. iii. 6. It is probable that either Peter had been there also, or at least that sundry persons converted by him were come thither, for he still mentions Cephas and Apollos with himself; chap. i. 12. iii. 22. This church, thus watered and planted, came together for the worship of God, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, chap. xi. 20. and for the administration of discipline in particular, chap. v. 4. After awhile, through the craft of Satan, various evils in doctrine, conversation, and church-order crept in amongst them: for doctrine, besides their mistake about eating things 'offered to idols,' chap. viii. 4. some of them denied the 'resurrection of the dead;' chap. xv. 12. In conversation they had not only the eruption of a scandalous particular sin amongst them, chap. v. 1. but grievous sinful miscarriages, when they 'came together' about holy administrations; chap. xi. 21. These the apostle distinctly reproves in them: their church-order, as to that love, peace, and union of heart and mind, wherein they ought to have walked, was wofully disturbed with divisions and sidings about their teachers; chap. i. 12. And not content to make this difference the matter of their debates and disputes from house to house, even when they met for public worship, or that which they all met in, and for, they were divided on that account; chap. xi. 18. This was their schism the apostle dehorts them from, charges them with, and shews them the evil thereof. They had differences amongst themselves about unnecessary things; on these they engaged in disputes and sidings, even in their solemn assemblies; when they came all together for the same worship about which they differed not. Probably much vain jangling, alienation of affections, exasperation of spirits, with a neglect of due offices of love ensued hereupon. All this appears from the entrance the apostle gives to his discourse on this subject, 1 Cor. i. 10. Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, 'I beseech you that ye all speak the same thing.' They were of various minds

and opinions about their church affairs, which was attended with the confusion of disputings: let it not be so, saith the apostle; καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, 'and let there be no schisms among you;' which consist in such differences and janglings: he adds, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοὶ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ; 'but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment.' They were joined together in the same church-order and fellowship, but he would have them so also in oneness of mind and judgment, which if they were not, though they continued together in their church-order, yet schisms would be amongst them. This was the state of that church, this the frame and carriage of the members of it, this the fault and evil whereon the apostle charges them with schism, and the guilt thereof. The grounds, whereon he manageth his reproof, are their common interest in Christ, chap. i. 13. the nothingness of the instruments of preaching the gospel, about whom they contended, chap. i. 14. iii. 4, 5. their church-order instituted by God, chap. xii. 13. of which afterward.

This being, as I said, the principal seat of all that is taught in the Scripture about schism, we are here, or hardly at all to learn what it is, and wherein it doth consist. The arbitrary definitions of men, with their superstructions and inferences upon them, we are not concerned in. At least I hope I shall have leave from hence to state the true nature of the thing, before it be judged necessary to take into consideration what by parity of reason may be deduced from it. In things purely moral, and of natural equity, the most general notion of them is to be the rule, whereby all particulars claiming an interest in their nature are to be measured and regulated; in things of institution, the particular instituted is first and principally to be regarded: how far the general reason of it may be extended is of after consideration; and as is the case in respect of duty, so it is in respect of the evils that are contrary thereto. True and false are indicated and tried by the same rule. Here then our foot is to be fixed; what compass may be taken to fetch in things of a like kin, will in its proper place follow. Observe then,

1. That the thing mentioned is entirely in one church, amongst the members of one particular society. No mea-

tion is there in the least of one church divided against another, or separated from another, or others; whether all true, or some true, some false, or but pretended. Whatever the crime be, it lies wholly within the verge of one church, that met together for the worship of God and administration of the ordinances of the gospel; and unless men will condescend so to state it upon the evidence tendered, I shall not hope to prevail much in the process of this discourse.

2. Here is no mention of any particular man's, or any number of men's separation from the holy assemblies of the whole church, or of subduction of themselves from its power, nor doth the apostle lay any such thing to their charge, but plainly declares, that they continued all in the joint celebration of that worship, and performance together of those duties, which were required of them in their assemblies; only they had groundless, causeless differences amongst themselves, as I shall shew afterward. All the divisions of one church from another, or others, the separation of any one or more persons from any church or churches, are things of another nature, made good or evil by their circumstances, and not that at all which the Scripture knows and calls by the name of schism; and therefore was there no such thing or name as schism, in such a sense, known in the Judaical church, though in the former it abounded. All the different sects to the last, still communicated in the same carnal ordinances; and those who utterly deserted them, were apostates, not schismatics; so were the body of the Samaritans, they worshipped they knew not what, nor was salvation among them; John iv. 22.

3. Here is no mention of any subtraction of obedience from bishops or rulers in what degree soever, no exhortation to regular submission unto them, much less from the pope or church of Rome; nor doth the apostle thunder out against them, You are departed from the unity of the catholic church, have rent Christ's seamless coat, set up 'altare contra altare,' have forsaken the visible head of the church, the fountain of all unity; you refuse due subjection to the prince of the apostles; nor, you are schismatics from the national church of Achaia, or have cast off the rule of your governors; with the like language of after days; but when you come toge-

ther, you have divisions amongst you: 'behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!'

A condition not unlike to this befalling this very church of Corinth, sundry years after the strifes now mentioned were allayed by the epistle of the apostle, doth again exhibit us the case and evil treated on. Some few unquiet persons among them drew the whole society (upon the matter) into division and an opposition to their elders. They, who were the causes, *μιαρᾶς καὶ ἀνοσίου στάσεως*, as Clement tells them in the name of the church at Rome, were *ὀλίγα πρόσωπα* a few men, acted by pride and madness: yet such power had those persons in the congregation, that they prevailed with the multitude to depose the elders and cast them out of office: so the same Clement tells them, *ὁρῶμεν ὅτι ἐνίους ὑμεῖς μεταγάγετε καλῶς πολιτευομένους ἐκ τῆς ἀμέμπτως αὐτοῖς τετιμημένης λειτουργίας*. What he intends by his *μεταγάγετε*, &c. he declares in the words foregoing, where he calls the elders, that were departed this life, happy and blessed, as not being subject or liable to expulsion out of their offices; *οὐ γὰρ εὐλαβοῦνται μή τις αὐτοὺς μεταστήσῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱδρυμένου αὐτοῖς τόπου*. Whether these men, who caused the differences and sedition against those elders that were deposed, were themselves by the church substituted into their room and place, I know not. This difference in that church, the church of Rome in that epistle of Clement calls everywhere schism, as it also expresses the same thing, or the evil frame of their minds and their actings by many other words; *ζῆλος, ἔρις, στάσις, διωγμὸς, ἀκαταστάσια, ἀλαζωνία, τύφος, πόλεμος*, are laid to their charge. That there was any separation from the church, that the deposed elders, or any for their sakes withdrew themselves from the communion of it, or ceased to assemble with it for the celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, there is not any mention: only the difference in the church, is the schism whereof they are accused. Nor are they accused of schism for the deposition of the elders, but for their differences amongst themselves, which was the ground of their so doing.

It is alleged, indeed, that it is not the single church of Corinth, that is here intended, but all the churches of Achaia, whereof that was the metropolis: which though as

to the nature of schism, it be not at all prejudicial to what hath been asserted, supposing such a church to be; yet because it sets up in opposition to some principles of truth, that must afterward be improved, I shall briefly review the arguments whereby it is attempted to be made good.

The title of the epistle in the first place is pretended to this purpose: it is ἡ ἐκκλησία θεοῦ παροικοῦσα Ῥωμὴν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ παροικούσῃ Κόρινθον· 'wherein' (as it is said) 'on each part the' παροικία or whole province, as of Rome, so of Corinth, the region and territory that belonged to those metropolises, is intended.' But, as I have formerly elsewhere said, we are beholden to the frame and fabric of church affairs in after ages for such interpretations as these; the simplicity of the first knew them not; they who talked of the church of God, that did παροικεῖν at Rome, little then thought of province or region. Ἐκκλησία παροικοῦσα Ῥωμὴν, is as much as ἐκκλησία ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, Acts viii. 1. Πάροικος is a man that dwells at such a place, properly one that dwells in another's house, or soil, or that hath removed from one place, and settled in another; whence it is often used in the same sense with μέτοιχος, he is such an inhabitant, as hath yet some such consideration attending him, as makes him a kind of a foreigner to the place where he is; so Eph. ii. 19. πάροικοι and συμπολῖται are opposed. Hence is παροικία, which, as Budæus says, differs from κατοικία, in that it denotes a temporary habitation; this a stable and abiding. Παροικέω is so to 'inhabit,' to dwell in a place, where yet something makes a man a kind of a stranger. So it is said of Abraham, πίστει παρῴκησεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ὡς ἀλλοτρίαν· Heb. xi. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 11. joined with παρεπίδημος (hence this word by the learned publisher of this epistle is rendered 'peregrinatur, diversatur'); and more clearly Luke xxiv. 18. σὺ μόνος παροικεῖς ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ, which we have rendered, 'are you only a stranger in Jerusalem.' Whether παροικία and 'parœcia' is from hence or no, by some is doubted; παροχος is 'convivater,' and παροχὴ 'præbitio,' Gloss. vetus: so that 'parochiæ' may be called so from them, who met together to break bread, and to eat. Allow 'parochia' to be barbarous, and our only word to be 'parœcia' from παροικία, then it is as much as the Voisinage, men living near together for any end

whatever. So says Budæus πάροικοι are πρόσοικοι; thence churches were called παροικίας, consisting of a number of them, who were πάροικοι or πρόσοικοι. The saints of God expressing the place which they inhabited, and the manner, as strangers, said of the churches whereof they were Ἐκκλησία παροικοῦσα Ῥωμὴν and ἐκκλησία παροικοῦσα Κόρινθον: this is now made to denote a region, a territory, the adjacent region to a metropolis; and such-like things, as the poor primitive pilgrims little thought of. This will scarcely, as I suppose, evince the assertion we are dealing about; there may be a church of God dwelling at Rome or Corinth, without any adjacent region annexed to it, I think. Besides, those who first used the word in the sense now supposed, did not understand a province by παροικία, which was with them (as originally) the charge of him that was a bishop, and no more. Ἐπαρχία was with them a province that belonged to a metropolitan; such as the bishop of Corinth is supposed to be. I do not remember where a metropolitan's province is called his παροικία, there being many of these in every one of them. But at present I will not herein concern myself.

But it is said, that this epistle of Clement was written to them, to whom Paul's epistles were written; which appears, as from the common title, so also from hence, that Clement advises them, to whom he writes, to take and consider that epistle, which Paul had formerly wrote to them; now Paul's epistle was written to all the churches of Asia, as it is said expressly in the second, 'To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints, which are in all Asia;' chap. i. 1. And for the former, that also is directed πᾶσι ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, and the same form is used at the close of this, καὶ μετὰ πάντων ταυταχῆ κεκλημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, wherein all places in Achaia (and everywhere therein) not absolutely are intended; for if they should, then this epistle would be a catholic epistle, and would conclude the things mentioned in it, of the letter received by the apostle, &c. to relate to the catholic church.

Ans. It is confessed, that the epistles of Paul, and Clement, have one common title; so that τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παροικούσῃ Κόρινθον, which is Clement's expression, is the same with τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, which is Paul's in both his

epistles, which adds little strength to the former argument from the word παροικοῦσα; οὐσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, as I suppose, confining it thither. It is true, Paul's second epistle, after its inscription τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ adds σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Αχαΐα. He mentions not any where any more churches in Achaia than that of Corinth, and that at Cenchrea; nor doth he speak of any churches here in this salutation, but only of the saints. And he plainly makes Asia and Corinth to be all one, 2 Cor. ix. 2. so that to me it appears, that there were none as yet, any more churches brought into order in Achaia, but that mentioned; with that other at Cenchrea, which, I suppose, comes under the same name with that at Corinth; nor am I persuaded, that it was a completed congregation in those days. Saints in Achaia that lived not at Corinth, there were perhaps many; but being scattered up and down, they were not formed into societies, but belonged to the church of Corinth, and assembled therewith, as they could, for the participation of ordinances: so that there is not the least evidence, that this epistle of Paul was directed to any other church, but that of Corinth. For the first, it can scarce be questioned; Paul writing an epistle for the instruction of the saints of God, and disciples of Christ in all ages, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, salutes in its beginning and ending all them, that on that general account are concerned in it. In this sense all his epistles were catholic, even those he wrote to single persons. The occasion of writing this epistle was indeed from a particular church, and the chief subject matter of it was concerning the affairs of that church. Hence it is in the first place particularly directed to them; and our present inquiry is not after all that by any means were, or might be, concerned in that which was then written, as to their present or future direction, but after them who administered the occasion to what was so written, and whose particular condition was spoken to: this, I say, was the single church of Corinth. That πάντες οἱ ἐπικαλούμενοι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, 'all in every place,' should be all only in Achaia, or that Clement's μετὰ πάντων πανταχῆ τῶν κεκλημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, should be 'with them that are called in Achaia,' I can yet see no ground to conjecture. Paul writes an epistle to *the* church of Ephesus, and concludes it, ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων

τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ: the extent of which prayer is supposed to reach farther than Ephesus, and the region adjacent. It doth not then as yet appear that Paul wrote his epistles particularly to any other, but the particular church at Corinth. If concerning the latter, because of that expression 'with all the saints which are in all Achaia,' it be granted there were more churches than that of Corinth, with its neighbour Cenchrea (which whether it were a stated distinct church on no, I know not), yet it will not at all follow, as was said before, that Clement, attending the particular occasion only, about which he and the church of Rome were consulted, did so direct his epistle, seeing he makes no mention in the least, that so he did. But yet, by the way, there is one thing more that I would be willingly resolved about in this discourse, and that is this; seeing that it is evident that the apostle by his πάντες ἐν πάντι τόπῳ; and Clemens, by his πάντων πανταχῆ κεκλημένων, intend an enlargement beyond the first and immediate direction to the church of Corinth, if by the church of Corinth, as it is pleaded, he intend to express that whole region of Achaia, what either the apostle, or Clemens do obtain by that enlargement, if restrained to that same place.

It is indeed said, that at this time there were many other episcopal sees in Achaia; which until it is attempted to be put upon some kind of proof, may be passed by: it is granted that Paul speaks of that which was done at Corinth, to be done in Achaia, Rom. xv. 26. as what is done in London is without doubt done in England: but that which lies in expectation of some light or evidence to be given unto it is, that there was a metropolitical see at Corinth, at this time, whereunto many episcopal sees in Achaia were in subordination, being all the παροικία of Corinth, all which are called the church of Corinth, by virtue of their subjection thereunto: when this is proved, I shall confess some principles I afterward insist on will be impaired thereby.

This then is added by the same author, 'That the ecclesiastical estate was then conformed to the civil: wherever there was a metropolis in a civil-political sense, there was seated also a metropolitical church: now that Corinth was a metropolis, the proconsul of Achaia keeping his residence there, in the first sense is confessed.' And besides what

follows from thence, by virtue of the principle now laid down, Chrysostom calls it a metropolis, relating to the time wherein Paul wrote his epistle to the church there in the latter sense also.

The plea about metropolitical churches, I suppose will be thought very impertinent to what I have now in hand, so it shall not at present be insisted on. That the state of churches in after ages was moulded and framed after the pattern of the civil government of the Roman empire is granted; and that conformity (without offence to any be it spoken) we take to be a fruit of the working of the mystery of iniquity. But that there was any such order instituted in the churches of Christ by the apostles, or any intrusted by authority from their Lord and ruler, is utterly denied; nor is any thing, but very uncertain conjectures from the sayings of men of after ages, produced to attest any such order or constitution. When the order, spiritnality, beauty, and glory of the church of Christ shall return, and men obtain a light whereby they are able to discern a beauty and excellency in the inward, more noble, spiritual part, indeed life and soul of the worship of God, these disputes will have an issue. Chrysostom says, indeed, that Corinth was the metropolis of Achaia, but in what sense he says not; the political is granted, the exclesiastical not proved; nor are we inquiring what was the state of the churches of Christ in the days of Chrysostom, but of Paul. But to return.

If any one now shall say, Will you conclude, because this evil mentioned by the apostle is schism, therefore nothing else is so?

I answer, That having before asserted this to be the chief and only seat of the doctrine of schism, I am inclinable so to do: and this I am resolved of, that unless any man can prove that something else is termed schism by some divine writer, or blamed on that head of account by the Holy Ghost elsewhere, and is not expressly reproved as another crime, I will be at liberty from admitting it so to be.

But yet for what may hence by a parity of reason be deduced, I shall close with, and debate at large, as I have professed.

The schism then here described by the apostle, and blamed by him, consists in causeless differences, and con-

tentions amongst the members of a particular church, contrary to that of love, prudence, and forbearance, which are required of them to be exercised amongst themselves and towards one another; which is also termed στάσις, Acts xv. 21. and διχοστασία, Rom. xvi. 17. And he is a schismatic that is guilty of this sin of schism, that is, who raiseth, or entertaineth, or persisteth in such differences; nor are these terms used by the divine writers in any other sense.

That any men may fall under this guilt, it is required,

1. That they be members of, or belong to, some one church, which is so by the institution and appointment of Jesus Christ. And we shall see that there is more required hereunto than the bare being a believer or a Christian.

2. That they either raise or entertain, and persist in causeless differences with others of that church more or less, to the interruption of that exercise of love in all the fruits of it, which ought to be amongst them; and the disturbance of the due performance of the duties required of the church, in the worship of God. As Clement in the forementioned epistle, φιλόνικοι ἐστὲ ἄδελφοι καὶ ζήλωται περὶ μὴ ἀνηκόντων εἰς σωτηρίαν.

3. That these differences be occasioned by, and do belong to, some things in a remoter or nearer distance appertaining to the worship of God; their differences on a civil account are elsewhere mentioned and reproved, 1 Epist. chap. vi. for therein also there was from the then state of things an ἥττημα, ver. 7.

This is that crime which the apostle rebukes, blames, condemns, under the name of schism, and tells them that were guilty of it, that they shewed themselves to be carnal, or to have indulged to the flesh and the corrupt principle of self, and their own wills, which should have been subdued to the obedience of the gospel. Men's definitions of things are for the most part arbitrary and loose; fitted and suited to their several apprehensions of principles and conclusions; so that nothing clear or fixed is generally to be expected from them: from the Romanists' description of schism, who violently, without the least colour or pretence, thrust in the pope and his headship, into all that they affirm in church matters, least of all. I can allow men that they may extend their definitions *of things unto* what they apprehend of an

alike nature to that, which gives rise to the whole disquisition, and is the first thing defined. But at this I must profess myself to be somewhat entangled, that I could never yet meet with a definition of schism, that did comprise, that was not exclusive of that which alone in the Scripture is affirmed so to be.

Austin's definition contains the sum of what hath since been insisted on: saith he, 'Schisma ni fallor est eadem opinantem, et eodem ritu utentem solo congregationis delectari dissidio.' Con. Faust. lib. 20. cap. 3. By 'dissidium congregationis' he intends separation from the church into a peculiar congregation; a definition directly suited to the cause he had in hand, and was pleading against the Donatists. Basil, in Epist. ad Amphiloch. Con. 44. distinguisheth between αἵρεσις, σχίσμα, and παρασυναγωγή: and as he makes schism to be a division arising from some church controversies suitable to what those days experienced, and in the substance true, so he tells us that παρασυναγωγή is when either presbyters, or bishops, or laicks hold unlawful meetings, assemblies, or conventicles, which was not long since with us the only schism.

Since those days schism in general hath passed for a causeless separation from the communion and worship of any true church of Christ (the Catholic church, saith the Papist), with a relinquishment of its society, as to a joint celebration of the ordinances of the gospel; how far this may pass for schism, and what may be granted in this description of it, the process of our discourse will declare. In the mean time I am most certain, that a separation from some churches, true or pretended so to be, is commanded in the Scriptures; so that the withdrawing from, or relinquishment of, any church or society whatever, upon the plea of its corruption, be it true or false, with a mind and resolution to serve God in the due observation of church institutions, according to that light which men have received, is nowhere called schism, nor condemned as a thing of that nature, but is a matter that must be tried out, whether it be good or evil, by virtue of such general rules and directions, as are given us in the Scriptures for our orderly and blameless walking with God in all his ways.

As for them who suppose all church power to be invested

in some certain church officers originally (I mean that which they call of jurisdiction), who on that account are 'eminenter,' the church, the union of the whole consisting in a subjection to those officers according to rules, orders, and canons of their appointment, whereby they are necessitated to state the business of schism on the rejection of their power and authority, I shall speak to them afterward at large. For the present, I must take leave to say, that I look upon the whole of such a fabric, as a product of prudence and necessity.

I cannot but fear lest some men's surmisings may prompt them to say, that the evil of schism is thus stated, in a compliance with that, and them, which before we blamed: and seems to serve to raise slight and contemptible thoughts of it, so that men need not be shaken though justly charged with it. But besides that sufficient testimony, which I have to the contrary, that will abundantly shelter me from this accusation, by an assurance that I have not the least aim δουλεύειν ὑποθέσει, I shall farther add my apprehension of the greatness of the evil of this sin, if I may first be borne with a little in declaring what usual aggravations of it I do either not understand, or else cannot assent unto.

Those who say it is a renting of the seamless coat of Christ (in which metaphorical expression men have wonderfully pleased themselves), seem to have mistaken their aim; and instead of an aggravation of its evil, by that figure of speech, to have extenuated it: a rent of the body well compacted, is not heightened to any one's apprehension, in its being called the renting of a seamless coat: but men may be indulged the use of the most improper and groundless expressions, so they place no power of argument in them, whilst they find them moving their own, and suppose them to have an alike efficacy upon the affections of others. I can scarce think that any ever supposed that the coat of Christ was a type of his church; his church being clothed with him, not he with it. And therefore, with commendation of his success who first invented that allusion, I leave it in the possession of them who want better arguments to evince the evil of this sin.

It is most usually said to be a sin against charity, as heresy is against faith. Heresy is a sin against faith, if I

may so speak, both as it is taken for the doctrine of faith, which is to be believed, and the assent of the mind whereby we do believe. He that is a heretic (I speak of him in the usual acceptation of the word, and the sense of them who make this comparison, in neither of which I am satisfied), rejects the doctrine of faith, and denies all assent unto it. Indeed he doth the former by doing the latter. But is schism so a sin against charity? doth it supplant and root out love out of the heart? is it an affection of the mind attended with an inconsistency therewith? I much question it.

The apostle tells us, 'that love is the bond of perfection,' Col. iii. 14. because in the several and various ways whereby it exerts itself, it maintains and preserves, notwithstanding all hinderances and oppositions, that perfect and beautiful order, which Christ hath appointed amongst his saints, wherein men by schism are kept off, and withheld from the performance of any of those offices and duties of love, which are useful or necessary for the preservation of the bond of perfection; then is it, or may in some sense be said to be, a sin against love.

Those who have seemed to aim nearest the apprehension of the nature of it in these days, have described it to be an open breach of love, or charity. That that expression is warily to be understood, is evident in the light of this single consideration. It is possible for a man to be all, and do all, that those were, and did, whom the apostle judges for schismatics, under the power of some violent temptation, and yet have his heart full of love to the saints of the communion disturbed by him. It is thus far then in its own nature a breach of love, in that in such men love cannot exert itself in its utmost tendency in wisdom and forbearance for the preservation of the perfect order instituted by Christ in his church. However I shall freely say, that the schoolmen's notion of it, who insist on this as its nature, that it is a sin against charity, as heresy is against faith, is fond and becoming them; and so will others also, that shall be pleased to consider, what they intend by charity.

Some say it is a rebellion against the church, that is, the rulers and officers of the church. I doubt not but that there must be either a neglect in the church in the performance of its duty, or of the authority of it in so doing, wherever there

is any schism, though the discovery of this also have innumerable entanglements attending it. But that to refuse the authority of the church is to rebel against the rulers or guides of it, will receive farther light than what it hath done, when once a pregnant instance is produced, not where the church signifies the officers of it, but where it doth not signify the body of the congregation in contradistinction from them, or comprising them therein.

Add unto these, those who dispute whether schismatics do belong to the church or no, and conclude in the negative; seeing according to the discovery already made, it is impossible a man should be a schismatic unless he be a church member. Other crimes a man may be guilty of on other accounts; of schism, only in a church. What is the formal reason of any man's relation to a church, in what sense soever that word is used, must be afterward at large discussed.

But now this foundation being laid, that schism is a causeless difference or division amongst the members of any particular church, that meet together, or ought so to do, for the worship of God, and celebration of the same numerical ordinances to the disturbance of the order appointed by Jesus Christ, and contrary to that exercise of love in wisdom and mutual forbearance, which is required of them, it will be easy to see, wherein the iniquity of it doth consist, and upon what considerations its aggravations do arise.

It is evidently a despising of the authority of Jesus Christ, the great sovereign Lord and head of the church. How often hath he commanded us to forbear one another, to forgive one another, to have peace among ourselves, that we may be known to be his disciples, to bear with them that are in any thing contrary minded to ourselves? To give light to this consideration, let that which at any time is the cause of such hateful divisions, rendered as considerable as the prejudices, and most importune affections of men can represent it to be, be brought to the rule of love and forbearance, in the latitude of it, as prescribed to us by Christ, and it will evidently bear no proportion thereunto. So that such differences, though arising on real miscarriages

and faults of some, because they might otherwise be handled and healed, and ought to be so, cannot be persisted in without the contempt of the immediate authority of Jesus Christ. If it were considered, that he standeth in 'the congregation of God;' Psal. lxxxii. 1. that he dwells in the 'church in glory as in Sinai in the holy place,' Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. 'walking in the midst of the candlesticks,' Rev. i. 13. with his eyes upon us as a 'flame of fire,' ver. 14. his presence and authority would perhaps be more prevalent with some, than they seem to be.

Again, His wisdom, whereby he hath ordered all things in his church, on set purpose, that schism and divisions may be prevented, is no less despised. Christ who is the wisdom of the Father, 1 Cor. i. 24. the stone on which are seven eyes, Zech. iii. 9. upon whose shoulders the government is laid, Isa. ix. 6, 7. hath in his infinite wisdom so ordered all the officers, orders, gifts, administrations of and in his church, as that this evil might take no place. To manifest this, is the design of the Holy Ghost, Rom. xii. 3—9. 1 Cor. xii. Eph. iv. 8—14. The consideration in particular of this wisdom of Christ, suiting the officers of his church, in respect of the places they hold, of the authority wherewith from him they are invested, the way whereby they are entered into their function, distributing the gifts of his Spirit in marvellous variety, unto several kinds of usefulness; and such distance, and dissimilitude in the particular members, as in a due correspondency and proportion give comeliness and beauty to the whole, disposing of the order of his worship, and sundry ordinances in especial, to be expressive of the highest love and union, pointing all of them against such causeless divisions, might be of use, were that my present intendment.

The grace and goodness of Christ, whence he hath promised to give us one heart, and one way, to leave us peace, such as the world cannot give, with innumerable other promises of the like importance, are disregarded thereby. So also is his prayer for us: with what affection and zeal did he pour out his soul to his Father forour union in love! That seems to be the thing his heart was chiefly fixed on, when he was leaving this world; John xvii. what weight he lay

thereon, how thereby we may be known to be his disciples, and the world be convinced that he was sent of God, is there also manifested.

How far the exercise of love and charity is obstructed by it, hath been declared. The consideration of the nature, excellency, property, effects, usefulness of this grace in all the saints in all their ways, its especial designation by our Lord and Master, to be the bond of union and perfection, in the way and order instituted for the comely celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, will add weight to this aggravation.

Its constant growing to farther evil, in some to apostacy itself; its usual and certain ending in strife, variance, debate, evil surmisings, wrath, confusion, disturbances public and private, are also to be laid all at its door. What farther of this nature and kind may be added (as much may be added) to evince the heinousness of this sin of schism, I shall willingly subscribe unto; so that I shall not trouble the reader in abounding in what on all hands is confessed.

It is incumbent upon him who would have me to go farther in the description of this evil than as formerly stated, to evince from Scripture, another notion of the name or thing than that given, which when he hath done, he shall not find me refractory. In the mean time I shall both consider what may be objected against that which hath been delivered, and also discuss the present state of our divisions on the usual principles, and common acception of schism; if first I may have leave to make some few inferences, or deductions from what hath already been spoken, and, as I hope, evinced.

On supposition that the church of Rome is a church of Christ, it will appear to be the most schismatical church in the world. I say on supposition that it is a church, and that there is such a thing as a schismatical church (as perhaps a church may from its intestine differences, be so not unfitly denominated), that is, the state and condition thereof. The pope is the head of their church, several nations of Europe are members of it. Have we not seen that head taking his flesh in his teeth, tearing his body and his limbs to pieces? Have some of them thought on any thing else, but, '*Arise, Peter, kill and eat,*' all their days? Have we not

seen this goodly head, in disputes about Peter's patrimony, and his own jurisdiction, wage war, fight, and shed blood, the blood of his own members? Must we believe armies raised, and battles fought, towns fired, all in pure love, and perfect church order? not to mention their old 'altare contra altare,' anti-popes, anti-councils; look all over their church, on their potentates, bishops, friars, there is no end of their variances. What do the chiefest, choicest pillars, eldest sons, and I know not what of their church at this day? do they not kill, destroy, and ruin each other, as they are able? Let them not say these are the divisions of the nations that are in their church, not of the church; for all these nations on their hypothesis are members of that one church. And that church, which hath no means to prevent its members from designed, resolved on, and continued murdering one of another, nor can remove them from its society, shall never have me in its communion, as being bloodily schismatical. Nor is there any necessity, that men should forego their respective civil interests, by being members of one church. Prejudicate apprehensions of the nature of a church, and its authority, lie at the bottom of that difficulty. Christ hath ordained no church, that inwraps such interests, as on the account whereof, the members of it may murder one another. Whatever then they pretend of unity, and however they make it a note of the true church (as it is a property of it), that which is like it amongst them, is made up of these two ingredients, Subjection to the pope, either for fear of their lives, or advantage to their livelihood; and a conspiracy for the destruction and suppression of them that oppose their interests; wherein they agree like those who maintained Jerusalem in its last siege by Titus; they all consented to oppose the Romans, and yet fought out all other things among themselves. That they are not so openly clamorous about the differences at present, as in former ages, is merely from the pressure of Protestants round about them. However, let them at this day silence the Jesuits and Dominicans, especially the Baijans and the Jansenians on the one part, and the Molinists on the other; take off the Gallican church from its schismatical refusal of the council of Trent; cause the king of Spain to quit his claim to Sicily, that they need not excommunicate him

every year; compel the commonwealth of Venice to receive the Jesuits; stop the mouths of the Sorbonists about the authority of a general council above the pope, and of all those, whom opposing the papal omnipotency they call politicians; quiet the contest of the Franciscans and Dominicans about the blessed Virgin; burn Bellarmine's books, who almost on every controversy of Christian religion gives an account of their intestine divisions, branding some of their opinions as heretical, as that of Medina about bishops and presbyters, some as idolatrical, as that of Thomas about the worship of the cross with 'latria,' &c. and they may give a better colour to their pretences, than any as yet it wears.

But what need I insist upon this supposition; when I am not more certain, that there is any instituted church in the world, owned by Christ as such, than I am, that the church of Rome is none, properly so called. Nor shall I be thought singular in this persuasion, if it be duly considered what this amounts unto. Some learned men of latter days in this nation, pleading in the justification of the church of England, as to her departure from Rome, did grant that the church of Rome doth not err in fundamentals, or maintained no errors remedilessly pernicious and destructive of salvation. How far they entangled themselves by this concession I argue not. The foundation of it lies in this clear truth, that no church whatever, universal or particular, can possibly err in fundamentals, for by so doing it would cease to be a church. My denying then the synagogue of Rome to be a church, according to their principles, amounts to no more than this; the Papists maintain in their public confessions, fundamental errors; in which assertion it is known I am not alone.

But this is not the principle, at least not the sole nor main principle, whereon I ground my judgment in this case; but this, that there was never any such thing in any tolerable likeness or similitude, as that which is called the church of Rome, allowing the most skilful of its rabbies to give in the characters and delineations of it, instituted in reference to the worship of God by Jesus Christ. The truth is, the whole of it is but an imitation and exemplar of the old imperial government; *one is set up in* chief and made ἀνθυπό-

θυνος in spirituals, as the emperors were in civil things; from him all power flows to others; and as there was a communication of power by the emperors in the civil state to præfects, proconsuls, vicars, presidents, governors of the lesser and greater nations, with those under them, in various civil subordinations, according to the dignity of the places where they did bear rule and preside, and in the military to generals, legates, tribunes, and the inferior officers; so is there by the pope, to patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, in their several subordinations, which are as his civil state; and to generals of religious orders, provincials, and their dependants, which are as his military. And it is by some (not in all things agreeing with them) confessed, that the government, pleaded for by them in the church, was brought in and established, in correspondency and accommodation to the civil government of the empire; which is undeniably evident and certain: now this being not thoroughly done till the empire had received an incurable wound, it seems to me to be the making of an image to the beast, giving life to it, and causing it to speak. So that the present Roman church is nothing else but an image or similitude of the Roman empire, set up in its declining among and over the same persons in succession, by the craft of Satan, through principles of deceit, subtlety, and spiritual wickedness, as the other was by force and violence, for the same ends of power, dominion, fleshliness, and persecution with the former.

The exactness of this correspondency in all things, both in respect of those who claim to be the stated body of his ecclesiastical commonwealth, and those who are merely dependent on his will, bound unto him professedly by a military sacrament, exempted from the ordinary rules and government of his fixed rulers in their several subordinations, under officers of their own immediately commissionated by him, with his management of both those parties to balance and keep them mutually in quiet and in order for his service (especially confiding in his men of war, like the emperors of old), may elsewhere be farther manifested.

I suppose it will not be needful to add any thing to evince the vanity of the pretensions of the Romanists or others against all or any of us, on the account of schism,

upon a grant of the principles laid down, it lies so clear in them without need of farther deduction; and I speak with some confidence, that I am not in expectation of any hasty confutation of them, I mean, that which is so indeed. The earnestness of their clamours, importuning us to take notice of them by the way, before I enter upon a direct debate of the cause, as it stands stated in reference to them, I shall only tell them, that seeking to repose our consciences in the mind of God revealed in the Scriptures, we are not at all concerned in the noise they make in the world. For what have we done? Wherein doth our guilt consist? Wherein lies the peculiar concernment of these ἀλλοτριεπίσκοποι? Let them go to the churches, with whom we walk, of whom we are, and ask of them concerning our ways, our love, and the duties of it; Do we live in strife, and variance? Do we not bear with each other? Do we not worship God without disputes and divisions? Have we differences and contentions in our assemblies? Do we break any bond of union, wherein we are bound, by the express institutions of Jesus Christ? If we have, let the righteous reprove us, we will own our guilt, confess we have been carnal, and endeavour reformation. If not, what have the Romanists, Italians, to do to judge us? Knew we not your design, your interest, your lives, your doctrines, your worship, we might possibly think, that you might intermeddle out of love and mistaken zeal, but 'ad populum Phaleras:' you would be making shrines, and thence is this stir and uproar. 'But we are schismatics in that we have departed from the catholic church; and for our own conventicles, they are no churches, but sties of beasts.' But this is most false. We abide in the catholic church under all the bonds wherein by the will of Christ we stand related unto it; which if we prove not with as much evidence as the nature of such things will bear, though you are not at all concerned in it, yet we will give you leave to triumph over us. And if our own congregations be not churches, whatsoever we are, we are not schismatics; for schism is an evil amongst the members of a church, if St. Paul may be believed. 'But we have forsaken the church of Rome.' But gentlemen, shew first how we were ever of it. No man hath lost that which he *never had*; nor hath left the place

or station wherein he never was. Tell me when or how we were members of your church? We know not your language, you are barbarians to us. It is impossible we should assemble with you. 'But your forefathers left that church, and you persist in their evil.' Prove that our forefathers were ever of your church in any communion instituted by Christ, and you say somewhat. To desert a man's station and relation, which he had on any other account, good or bad, is not schism, as shall farther be manifested.

Upon the same principle, a plea for freedom from the charge of any church, real or pretended, as national, may be founded and confirmed; either we are of the national church of England (to give that instance) or we are not; if we are not, and are exempted by our protestation, as before, whatever we are, we are not schismatics; if we are fatally bound unto it, and must be members of it, whether we will or no, being made so we know not how, and continuing so we know not why, shew us then what duty or office of love is incumbent on us, that we do not perform? Do we not join in external acts of worship in peace with the whole church? Call the whole church together, and try what we will do. Do we not join in every congregation in the nation? This is not charged on us; nor will any say, that we have right so to do, without a relation to some particular church in the nation; I know where the sore lies. A national officer, or officers, with others acting under them in several subordinations, with various distributions of power, are the church intended. A non-submission to their rules and constitutions, is the schism we are guilty of.

Quem das finem rex magne laborum!

But this pretence shall afterward be sifted to the utmost. In the mean time let any one inform me, what duty I ought to perform towards a national church, on supposition there is any such thing, by virtue of an institution of Jesus Christ, that is possible for me to perform, and I shall σὺν θεῷ address myself unto it.

To close these considerations with things of more immediate concernment. Of the divisions that have fallen out amongst us in things of religion, since the last revolutions of this nation, there is no one thing hath been so effectual a

promotion (such is the power of tradition and prejudice, which even bear all before them in human affairs) as the mutual charging one another with the guilt of schism. That the notion of schism, whereon this charge is built by the most, if not all, was invented by some of the ancients, to promote their plea and advantage with them with whom they had to do, without due regard to the simplicity of the gospel, at least in a suitableness to the present state of the church in those days, is too evident. For on very small foundations have mighty fabrics, and μορμωλυκία in religion been raised. As an ability to judge of the present posture and condition of affairs, with counsel to give direction for their order and management, towards any end proposed, not an ability to contrive for events, and to knit on one thing upon another, according to a probability of success for continuance, which is almost constantly disturbed by unexpected providential interveniences, leaving the contrivers at a perplexing loss, will be found to be the sum of human wisdom; so it will be our wisdom in the things of God, not to judge according to what by any means is made present to us, and its principles on that account rendered ready to exert themselves, but ever to recoil to the original, and first institution. When a man first falls into some current, he finds it strong and almost impassable; trace it to its fountain, and it is but a dribbling gutter. Paul tells the members of the church of Corinth, that there were divisions amongst them, breaches of that love and order, that ought to be observed in religious assemblies. Hence there is a sin of schism raised, which when considered as now stated, doth no more relate to that treated on by the apostle, than 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' doth to the pope's supremacy; or Christ's saying to Peter of John, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' did to the report that went afterward abroad, 'that that disciple should not die.' When God shall have reduced his churches to their primitive purity and institution, when they are risen, and have shaken themselves out of the dust, and things of religion return to their native simplicity, it is scarce possible to imagine what vizards will fall off, and what a contrary appearance many things will have, to what they now walk up and down in.

I wish that those who are indeed really concerned in this business, namely, the members of particular churches, who have voluntarily given up themselves to walk in them according to the appointment of Christ, would seriously consider what evil lies at the door, if they give place to causeless differences and divisions amongst themselves. Had this sin of schism been rightly stated, as it ought, and the guilt of it charged in its proper place, perhaps some would have been more careful in their deportment in their relations. At present, the dispute in the world relating hereunto, is about subjection to the pope, and the church of Rome, as it is called: and this managed on the principles of edicts and of councils, with the practices of princes and nations, in the days long ago past, with the like considerations, wherein the concernment of Christians is doubtless very small. Or of obedience and conformity to metropolitan, and diocesan bishops in their constitutions, and ways of worship, jointly or severally prescribed by them. In more ancient times, that which was agitated under the same name, was about persons or churches renouncing the communion and society of saints with all other churches in the world, consenting with them in the same confession of faith, for the substance of it. And these differences respectively are handled, in reference to what the state of things was, and is grown unto in the days wherein they are managed. When Paul wrote his epistle there was no occasion given to any such controversies, nor foundation laid making them possible. That the disciples of Christ ought everywhere to abound in love and forbearance towards one another, especially to carry all things in union and peace in those societies wherein they were joined for the worship of God, were his endeavours, and exhortations: of these things he is utterly silent: let them who aim to recover themselves into the like state and condition consider his commands, exhortations, and reproofs. Things are now generally otherwise stated, which furnisheth men with objections against what hath been spoken, to whose removal, and farther clearing of the whole matter, I shall now address myself.

CHAP. III.

Objections against the former discourse proposed to consideration. Separation from any church in the Scripture not called schism. Grounds of such separation. Apostacy, irregular walking, sensuality. Of separation on the account of reformation. Of commands for separation. No example of churches departing from the communion of another. Of the common notion of schism, and the use made of it. Schism a breach of union. The union instituted by Christ.

THAT which lies obvious to every man against what hath been delivered, and which is comprehensive of what particular objections, to which it seems liable and obnoxious, is, that according to this description of schism, separation of any man or men from a true church, or of one church from others, is not schism; seeing that is an evil only amongst the members of one church, whilst they continue so to be: which is so contrary to the judgment of the generality of Christians in this business, that it ought to be rejected as fond and absurd.

Of what hath been the judgment of most men in former ages, what it is in this, what strength there is in an argument deduced from the consent pretended, I am not as yet arrived to the consideration. Nor have I yet manifested, what I grant of the general notion of schism, as it may be drawn by way of analogy or proportion of reason, from what is delivered in the Scriptures concerning it.

I am upon the precise signification of the word and description of the thing, as used and given by the Holy Ghost: in this sense I deny that there is any relinquishment, departure, or separation from any church or churches, mentioned or intimated in the Scripture, which is, or is called schism, or agreeth with the description by them given us of that term. Let them that are contrary minded attempt the proof of what they affirm. As far as a negative proposition is capable of evidence from any thing but the weakness of the opposition made unto it, that laid down will receive it by the ensuing considerations.

All blameable departure from any church or churches, or relinquishment of them mentioned in the gospel, may be reduced to one of these three heads or causes: 1. Apostacy. 2. *Irregularity of walking.* 3. Professed sensuality.

1. Apostacy or falling away from the faith of the gospel, and thereupon forsaking the congregations or assemblies for the worship of God in Jesus Christ is mentioned, Heb. x. 25. μὴ ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν, 'not wholly deserting the assembling ourselves, as is the manner of some.' A separation from, and relinquishment of, the communion of that church, or those churches, with whom men have assembled for the worship of God, is the guilt here charged on some by the apostle. Upon what account they so separated themselves is declared, ver. 26. 'they sinned wilfully, after they had received the knowledge of the truth;' thereby slipping out their necks from the yoke of Christ, ver. 28. and 'drawing back to perdition;' ver. 39. that is, they departed off to Judaism. I much question, whether any one would think fit to call these men schismatics; or whether we should so judge, or so speak of any, that in these days should forsake our churches, and turn Mahometans; such departure makes men apostates, not schismatics. Of this sort many are mentioned in the Scriptures. Nor are they not at all accounted schismatics, because the lesser crime is swallowed up and drowned in the greater, but because their sin is wholly of another nature.

Of some, who withdraw themselves from church communion, at least for a season, by their disorderly and irregular walking, we have also mention. The apostle calls them, ἄτακτοι, 1 Thess. v. 14. 'unruly,' or 'disorderly persons,' not abiding in obedience to the order prescribed by Christ in and unto his churches; and says, they walked ἀτάκτως; 2 Thess. iii. 6. out of all church order; whom he would have warned and avoided: so also ἀτόπους, chap. iii. 2. persons that abide quietly in no place or station, but wandered up and down; whom whatever their profession be, he denies to have faith. That there were many of this sort in the primitive times, who through a vain and slight spirit neglected and fell off from church assembles, when yet they would not openly renounce the faith of Christ, is known. Of such disorderly persons we have many in our days wherein we live, whom we charge not with schism, but vanity, folly, disobedience to the precepts of Christ in general.

Men also separated themselves from the churches of Christ upon the account of sensuality, that they might freely

indulge to their lusts and live in all manner of pleasure all their days; Jude 19. These are they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.' Who are these? They that 'turn the grace of God into laciviousness and that deny the Lord God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ,' ver. 4. 'that defile the flesh after the manner of Sodom and Gomorrah,' ver. 7, 8. that spoke 'evil of things they knew not, and in things they knew naturally as brute beasts they corrupted themselves,' ver. 10. sinning openly like beasts against the light of nature; so ver. 12, 13. 16. 'These,' saith the apostle, 'are they that separate themselves,' men given over to work all uncleanness with delight and greediness in the face of the sun, abusing themselves and justifying their abominations with a pretence of the grace of God.

That there is any blameable separation from, or relinquishment of, any church or churches of Christ, mentioned in the Scripture; but what may be referred to one of those heads, I am yet to learn. Now whether the men of these abominations are to be accounted schismatics, or their crime in separating themselves to be esteemed schism, it is not hard to judge: if on any of these accounts, any persons have withdrawn themselves from the communion of any church of Christ, if they have on any motives of fear, or love, apostatized from the faith of the gospel, if they do it by walking disorderly and loosely in their conversations, if they give themselves up to sensuality and uncleanness, and so to be no more able to bear the society of them whom God hath called to holiness and purity of life, and worship, they shall assuredly bear their own burden.

But none of these instances are comprehensive of the case inquired after; so that for a close of them, I say, for a man to withdraw or withhold himself from the communion external and visible of any church or churches, on the pretension and plea, be it true or otherwise, that the worship, doctrine, discipline, instituted by Christ is corrupted among them, with which corruption he dares not defile himself, it is nowhere in the Scripture called schism, nor is that case particularly exemplified, or expressly supposed, whereby a judgment may be made of the fact at large; but we are left upon the whole matter to the guidance of such general principles and rules *as are given us for* that end and purpose.

What may regularly, on the other hand, be deduced from the commands given to 'turn away from them who have only a form of godliness,' 2 Tim. iii. 5. to 'withdraw from them that walk disorderly, 2 Thes. iii. 6. not to bear nor endure in communion, men of corrupt principles, and wicked lives, Rev. ii. 14. but positively to separate from an apostate church, Rev. xviii. 4. that in all things we may worship Christ according to his mind and appointment, what is the force of these commands *ἀποτρέπεσθαι, μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι, παραπεῖασθαι, ἐκκλίνειν, μὴ κοινωνεῖν, μὴ λέγειν χαίρειν, φεύγειν*, and the like, is without the compass of what I am now treating about.

Of one particular church departing from that communion with another, or others, be it what it will, which it ought to hold, unless in the departing of some of them, in some things, from the common faith, which is supposed not to relate to schism, in the Scripture we have no example. Diotrephes assuming an authority over that church wherein he was placed, 3 John 9, 10. and for a season hindering the brethren from the performance of the duty incumbent upon them, toward the great apostle and others, makes the nearest approach to such a division: but yet in such a distance, that it is not at all to our purpose in hand. When I come to consider that communion that churches have, or ought to have among themselves, this will be more fully discussed. Neither is this my sense alone, that there is no instance of any such separation as that, which is the matter of our debate, to be found in the Scripture. It is confessed by others differing from me, in and about church affairs. To 'leave all ordinary communion in any church with dislike, where opposition or offence offers itself, is to separate from such a church in the Scripture sense; such separation was not in being in the apostles time,' say they, Pap. Accom. p. 55. But how they came to know exactly the sense of the Scripture in and about things not mentioned in them, I know not. As I said before, were I unwilling, I do not as yet understand how I may be compelled to carry on the notion of schism any farther: nor is there need of adding any thing to demonstrate how little the conscience of a godly man, walking peaceably in any particular church-society, is concerned in all the clamorous disputes of this age about it; being built on false hypo-

thesis, presumptions, and notions, no other way considerable, but as received by tradition from our fathers.

But I shall for the sake of some carry on this discourse to a fuller issue; there is another common notion of schism, which pleads to an original from that spoken expressly of it, by a parity of reason, which tolerable in itself, hath been and is injuriously applied, and used, according as it hath fallen into the hands of men who needed it as an engine to fix or improve them in the station wherein they are, or were; and wherewith they are pleased. Indeed, being invented for several purposes, there is nothing more frequent than for men, who are scarce able to keep off the force of it from their own heads, whilst managed against them by them above; at the same time vigorously to apply it for the oppression of all under them. What is on all hands consented unto, as its general nature, I shall freely grant that I might have liberty and advantage thence to debate the restriction and application of it to the several purposes of men prevailing themselves thereon.

Let then the general demand be granted, that schism is διάιρεσις τῆς ἑνότητος, 'the breach of union;' which I shall attend with one reasonable postulatum, namely, that this union be a union of the appointment of Jesus Christ: the consideration then of what, or what sort of union in reference to the worship of God, according to the gospel, is instituted and appointed by Jesus Christ, is the proper foundation of what I have farther to offer in this business. Let the breach of this, if you please, be accounted schism; for being an evil, I shall not contend by what name or title it be distinguished. It is not pleaded that any kind of relinquishment or desertion of any church or churches is presently schism, but only such a separation as breaks the bond of union instituted by Christ.

Now this union being instituted in the church, according to the various acceptations of that word, so is it distinguished. Therefore, for a discovery of the nature of that which is particularly to be spoken to, and also its contrary, I must shew,

1. The several considerations of the church, wherein, and with which, union is to be preserved.

2. What that union is, and wherein it doth consist, which

according to the mind of Christ we are to keep and observe with the church, under the several notions of it respectively.

3. And how that union is broken, and what is that sin whereby it is done.

In handling this triple proposal, I desire that it may not be expected that I should much insist on any thing that falls in my way, though never so useful to my end and purpose, which hath been already proved and confirmed by others beyond all possibility of control; and such will many, if not most of the principles that I proceed upon appear to be.

CHAP. IV.

Several acceptations in the Scripture of the name church. Of the church catholic properly so called. Of the church visible. Perpetuity of particular churches. A mistake rectified. The nature of the church catholic evinced. Bellarmine's description of the church catholic. Union of the church catholic, wherein it consists. Union by way of consequence. Unity of faith. Of love. The communion of the catholic church in and with itself. The breach of the union of the church catholic, wherein it consisteth. Not morally possible. Protestants not guilty of it. The papal world out of interest in the church catholic. As partly profane. Miracles no evidence of holiness. Partly ignorant. Self-justitiaries. Idolatrous. Worshippers of the beast.

To begin with the first thing proposed. The church of Christ living in this world, as to our present concernment, is taken in Scripture three ways.

1. For the mystical body of Christ, his elect, redeemed, justified, and sanctified ones throughout the world, commonly called the church-catholic militant.

2. For the universality of men throughout the world, called by the preaching of the word, visibly professing and yielding obedience to the gospel; called by some the church-catholic visible.

3. For a particular church of some place, wherein the instituted worship of God in Christ is celebrated according to his mind.

From the rise and nature of the things themselves, doth this distinction of the signification of the word church arise; for whereas the church is a society of men called out of the

world, it is evident there is mention of a twofold call in Scripture, one effectual, according to the purpose of God, Rom. viii. 28. the other only external. The church must be distinguished according to its answer and obedience to these calls, which gives us the two first states and considerations of it. And this is confessed by the ordinary gloss, ad Rom. 8. 'Vocatio exterior fit per prædicatores, et est communis bonorum, et malorum, interior vero tantum est electorum.' And whereas there are laws and external rules for joint communion, given to them that are called, which is confessed, the necessity of churches in the last acceptation, wherein obedience can alone be yielded to those laws, is hereby established.

In the first sense the church hath as such the properties of perpetuity, invisibility, infallibility, as to all necessary means of salvation attending of it; not as notes whereby it may be known, either in the whole, or any considerable part of it, but as certain adjuncts of its nature and existence. Neither are they any signs of less or more certainty, whereby the whole may be discerned or known as such; though there are of the individuals whereof it doth consist.

In the second, the church hath perpetuity, visibility, and infallibility as qualified above, in a secondary sense; namely, not as such, not as visible and confessing, but as comprising the individuals whereof the catholic church doth consist. For all that truly believe, profess; though all that profess, do not truly believe.

Whether Christ hath had always a church in the last sense and acceptation of the word, in the world, is a most needless inquiry: nor are we concerned in it, any farther than in other matters of fact, that are recorded in story: though I am apt to believe, that although very many in all ages kept up their station in, and relation to, the church in the two former acceptations, yet there was in some of them scarce any visible society of worshippers, so far answering the institution of Christ, as to render them fit to be owned and joined withal, as a visible particular church of Christ. But yet, though the notions of men were generally corrupt, the practice of all professors throughout the world, whereof so little is recorded, and least of them that did best, is not

rashly to be determined of. Nor can our judgment be censured in this, by them who think that when Christ lay in the grave there was no believer left but his mother, and that the church was preserved in that one person: so was Bernard minded, Tractat. de Pass. 'Dom. (ego sum vitis) sola per illud triste sabbathum stetit in fide, et salvata fuit ecclesia in ipsa sola.' Of the same mind is Marsilius in Sent. quæst. 20. art. 3. as are also others of that sort of men. See Bannes in 2. 2. Thom. quæst. 1. art. 10. I no way doubt of the perpetual existence of innumerable believers in every age, and such as made the profession that is absolutely necessary to salvation one way or other: though I question a regular association of men, for the celebration of instituted worship, according to the mind of Christ. The seven thousand in Israel, in the days of Elijah, were members of the church of God, and yet did not constitute a church-state among the ten tribes. But these things must be farther spoken to.

I cannot but by the way remind a learned person, with whom I have formerly occasionally had some debate in print about episcopacy, and the state of the first churches, of a mistake of his, which he might have prevented with a little inquiry into the judgment of them, whom he undertook to confute at a venture. I have said, that there was not any ordinary church officer instituted in the first times, relating to more churches in his office, or to any other church, than a single particular congregation; he replies, that 'this is the very same, which his memory suggested to him out of the Saints' Belief, printed twelve or fourteen years since, where, instead of that article of the apostolic symbol, the holy catholic church, this very hypothesis was substituted.' If he really believed that in professing I owned no instituted church with officers of one denomination in Scripture, beyond a single congregation, I renounced the catholic church, or was any way necessitated so to do, I suppose he may by what hath now been expressed, be rectified in his apprehension. If he was willing only to make use of the advantage, wherewith he supposed himself accommodated by that expression, to press the persuasion owned in the minds of ignorant men, who could not but startle at the noise of deny-

ing the catholic church, it may pass at the same rate that most of the repartees in such discourses are to be allowed at. But to proceed.

In the first sense the word is used Matt. xvi. 28. 'Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' This is the church of the elect, redeemed, justified, sanctified ones, that are so built on Christ; and these only, and all these are interested in the promise made to the church; there is no promise made to the church as such, in any sense, but is peculiarly made therein, to every one that is truly and properly a part and member of that church. Who, and who only are interested in that promise, Christ himself declares, John vi. 40. x. 28, 29. xvii. 20. 24. They that will apply this to the church in any other sense, must know that it is incumbent on them to establish the promise made to it unto every one that is a true member of the church in that sense, which whatever be the sense of the promise I suppose they will find difficult work of. Eph. v. 25—27. 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' He speaks only of those, whom Christ loved antecedently to his dying for them, whereof his love to them was the cause; who they are is manifest, John x. 15. xvii. 17. And those on whom by his death he accomplished the effects mentioned, by washing, cleansing, and sanctifying, bringing them into the condition promised to the 'bride the Lamb's wife,' Rev. xix. 8. which is the 'new Jerusalem,' xxi. 2. of elected and saved ones; ver. 27. Col. i. 18. contains an expression of the same light and evidence; 'Christ is the head of the body the church;' not only a governing head, to give it rules and laws; but as it were a natural head unto the body, which is influenced by him with a new spiritual life, which Bellarmine professeth against, as any requisite condition to the members of the catholic church, which he pleaded for. In that same sense, ver. 24. saith the apostle, 'I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:' which assertion is exactly parallel to that of 2 Tim. ii. 10. 'Therefore I endure *all things for the* elect's sake, that they

may obtain salvation;' so that the elect and the church are the same persons under several considerations: and therefore even a particular church, on the account of its participation of the nature of the catholic, is called elect; 1 Pet. v. 13. and so the church, Matt. xvi. 18. is expounded by our Saviour himself, chap. xxii. 24. But to prove at large by a multiplication of arguments and testimonies, that the catholic church, or mystical body of Christ, consists of the whole number of the elect, as redeemed, justified, sanctified, called, believing, and yielding obedience to Christ throughout the world (I speak of it as militant in any age), and of them only, were as needlessly 'actum agere,' as a man can well devise. It is done already, and that to the purpose uncontrollably, 'terque quaterque.' And the substance of the doctrine is delivered by Aquinas himself, p. 3. q. 8. a. 3. In brief, the sum of the inquiry upon this head, is concerning the matter of that church, concerning which such glorious things are spoken in Scripture; namely, that it is the spouse, the wife, the bride, the sister, the only one of Christ, his dove undefiled, his temple, elect, redeemed, his Zion, his body, his new Jerusalem; concerning which inquiry, the reader knows where he may abundantly find satisfaction.

That the asserting the catholic church in this sense is no new apprehension, is known to them who have at all looked backward to what was past before us. 'Omnibus consideratis,' saith Austin, 'puto me non temere dicere, alios ita esse in domo Dei, ut ipsi etiam sint eadem domus Dei, quæ dicitur ædificari supra petram, quæ unica columba appellatur, quæ sponsa pulchra sine macula, et ruga, et hortus conclusus, fons signatus, puteus aquæ vivæ, paradisus cum fructu pomorum, alios autem ita constat esse in domo, ut non pertineant ad compagem domus.—Sed sicut esse palea dicitur in frumentis;' de Bapt. lib. 1. cap, 51. who is herein followed by not a few of the Papists. Hence saith Biel. 'Accipitur etiam ecclesia pro tota multitudine prædestinatorum;' in Canon. Miss. Lec. 22. In what sense this church is visible, was before declared. Men elected, redeemed, justified as such are not visible, for that which makes them so is not: but this hinders not but they may be so upon the other consideration; sometimes to more, sometimes to fewer, yea, they are so always to some. Those that are may be seen;

and when we say they are visible, we do not intend that they are actually seen by any that we know, but that they may be so.

Bellarmine gives us a description of this catholic church (as the name hath of late been used at the pleasure of men, and wrested to serve every design that was needful to be carried on) to the interest which he was to contend for, but in itself perfectly ridiculous. He tells us out of Austin, that the church is a living body, wherein is a body and a soul, thence, saith he, the soul is the internal graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love: the body is the external profession of faith; some are of the soul and body perfectly united to Christ by faith, and the profession of it; some are of the soul that are not of the body, as the catechumeni, which are not as yet admitted to be members of the visible church, but yet are true believers. Some, saith he, are of the body that are not of the soul, who having no true grace, yet out of hope or temporal fear do make profession of the faith, and these are like the hair, nails, and ill humours in a human body. Now, saith Bellarmine, our definition of a church compriseth only the last sort, whilst they are under the head the pope; which is all one, as if he had defined a man to be a dead creature, composed of hair, nails, and ill humours, under a hat. But of the church in this sense so far.

It remaineth, then, that we inquire what is the union which the church in this sense hath, from the wisdom of its head, Jesus Christ. That it is one, that it hath a union with its head, and in itself, is not questioned. It is one sheepfold, one body, one spouse of Christ, his only one as unto him; and that it might have oneness in itself, with all the fruits of it, our Saviour prays, John xvii. 19—23. The whole of it is described, Eph. iv. 15, 16. 'May grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying itself in love.' And of the same importance is that of the same apostle, Col. ii. 19. 'Not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.'

Now in the union of the church in every sense, there is considerable both the 'formalis ratio' of it, whence it is, what it is, and the way and means whereby it exerts itself, and is useful and active in communion. The first, in the church, as now stated, consists in its joint holding the head, and growing up into him by virtue of the communication of supplies unto it therefrom, for that end and purpose. That which is the formal reason and cause of the union of the members with the head, is the formal reason and cause of the union of the members themselves. The original union of the members is in and with the head; and by the same have they union with themselves as one body. Now the inhabitation of the same Spirit in him and them, is that which makes Christ personal, and his church, to be one Christ mystical, 1 Cor. xii. 12. Peter tells us, that we are by the promises 'made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Epist. i. 4. We are θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως, we have communion with it: that θεία φύσις is no more but καινὴ κτίσις, I cannot easily consent. Now it is in the person of the Spirit whereof we are by the promise made partakers: he is the Spirit of promise, Eph. i. 13. promised by God to Christ, Acts ii. 33. ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἔλαβε παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, and by him to us, John xiv. 16. being of old the great promise of the covenant, Isa. lix. 21. Ezek. xi. 17. xxvi. 36. Now in the participation of the divine nature consists the union of the saints with Christ. John vi. 55. our Saviour tells us, that it arises from eating his flesh and drinking his blood: 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' This he expounds ver. 63. 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth not.' By the quickening Spirit, inhabitation in Christ, and Christ in it, is intended. And the same he manifests in his prayer that his church may be one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father, John xvii. 21. for the Spirit being the love of the Father and of the Son is 'vinculum Trinitatis:' and so here of our union in some resemblance.

The unity of members in the body natural with one head is often chosen to set forth the union of the church, 1 Cor. xii. 12. xi. 3. Eph. v. 23. Col. i. 19. Now every man can tell, that, union of the head and members, whereby *they become* all one body, that and not another, is oneness

of soul; whereby the whole is animated, which makes the body, be it less or greater, to be one body. That which answers hereunto, in the mystical body of Christ, is the animation of the whole by his Spirit, as the apostle fully, 1 Cor. xv. 45. The union between husband and wife is also chosen by the Holy Ghost to illustrate the union between Christ and his church. 'For this cause shall a man forsake his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his church;' Eph. v. 31, 32. The union between man and wife we have, Gen ii. 24. 'They be no more twain but one flesh;' of Christ and his church that they are one spirit. 'For he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' 1 Cor. vi. 17. See also another similitude of the same importance, John xv. 5. Rom. xi. 16, 17. This, I say, is the fountain radical union of the church catholic in itself, with its head and formal reason of it.

Hence flows a double consequential union that it hath also. 1. Of faith. All men united to Christ by the inhabitation of the same Spirit in him and them, are by it from and according to the word, 'taught of God,' Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45. so taught, every one of them, as to come to Christ, ver. 46. that is, by believing, by faith. They are so taught of God, as that they shall certainly have that measure of knowledge and faith, which is needful to bring them to Christ, and to God by him. And this they have by the unction or Spirit, which they have received, 1 John ii. 21. 27. accompanying the word by virtue of God's covenant with them; Isa. lix. 29. And hereby are all the members of the church catholic, however divided in their visible profession, by any differences among themselves, or differenced by the several measures of gifts and graces they have received, brought to the perfection aimed at, to the unity of the faith, and to the 'acknowledgment of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;' Eph. iv. 13.

Nor was this hidden from some of the Papists themselves. 'Ecclesia sancta corpus est Christi uno Spiritu vivificata, unita fide una, et sanctificata,' saith Hugo de Victore, de Sacram. lib. 2. as he had said before in the former cap. 'Sicut scriptum *est qui non* habet Spiritum Christi,

hic non est ejus: qui non habet Spiritum Christi, non est membrum Christi; in corpore uno Spiritus unus, nihil in corpore mortuum, nihil extra corpus vivum.' See to the same purpose, Enchirid. Concil Colon in Symbol.

With peculiar reference to the members themselves, there is another necessary consequence of the union mentioned; and that is the mutual love of all those united in the head as before towards one another, and of every one towards the whole, as so united in the head Christ Jesus; there is an 'increase made of the body to the edifying itself in love;' Eph. iv. 16. And so it becomes the bond of perfectness to this body of Christ. I cannot say, that the members or parts of this church have their union in themselves by love; because they have that with and in Christ, whereby they are one in themselves, John xvii. 21. 23. they are one in God, even in Christ, where their life is hid; Col. iii. 3. But it is the next and immediate principle of that communion, which they severally have one with another, and the whole body, in and with itself. I say then, that the communion which the catholic church, the mystical body of Christ, hath with and in itself, springing from the union which it hath in and with Christ, and in itself thereby, consists in love, exerting itself in inexpressible variety, according to the present state of the whole, its relation to Christ, to saints and angels, with the conditions and occasions of the members of it respectively; 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

What hath been spoken concerning the union and communion of this church, will not I suppose, meet with any contradiction. Granting that there is such a church, as that we speak of, 'cœtus prædestinatorum credentium,' the Papists themselves will grant that Christ alone is its head, and that its union ariseth from its subjection to him, and dependance on him. Their modesty makes them contented with constituting the pope in the room of Christ, as he is as it were a political head for government; they have not as yet directly put in their claim to his office as a mystical head, influencing the body with life and motion; though by their figment of the sacraments communicating grace, 'ex opere operato,' and investing the original power of dispensing them in the pope only, they have contended fair *for it. But if* any one can inform me of any other union,

or communion of the church, described as above, than these laid down, I shall willingly attend unto his instructions. In the mean time, to carry on the present discourse unto that which is aimed at, it is manifest, that the breach of this union must consist in these two things:

1. The casting out, expelling, and loosening that spirit, which abiding in us, gives us this union.

2. The loss of that love, which thence flows into the body of Christ, and believers, as parts and members thereof.

This being the state of the church under the first consideration of it, certainly it would be an extravagancy scarcely to be paralleled, for any one to affirm a breach of this union, as such, to be schism, under that notion of it which we are inquiring after. But because there is very little security to be enjoyed in an expectation of the sobriety of men in things wherein they are, or suppose they may be concerned, that they may know beforehand what is farther incumbent on them, if in reference to us, they would prevail themselves of any such notion, I here inform them that our persuasion is, that this union was never utterly broken by any man taken into it, or ever shall be to the end of the world, and I suppose they esteem it vain to dispute about the adjuncts of that which is denied to be.

But yet this persuasion being not common to us, with them with whom we have to do in this matter, I shall not farther make use of it, as to our present defence. That any other union of the catholic church, as such, can possibly be fancied or imagined by any (as to the substance of what hath been pleaded), leaving him a plea for the ordinary soundness of his intellectuals, is denied.

Let us see now then what is our concernment in this discourse; unless men can prove that we have not the Spirit of God, that we do not savingly believe in Jesus Christ, that we do not sincerely love all the saints, his whole body, and every member of it, they cannot disprove our interest in the catholic church. It is true, indeed, men that have so great a confidence of their own abilities, and such a contempt of the world, as to undertake to dispute men out of conclusions from their natural senses, about their proper objects, in what they see, feel, and handle, and will not be satisfied, that they have *not proved there is no* motion, whilst a man

walks for a conviction under their eye; may probably venture to disprove us, in our spiritual sense and experience also, and to give us arguments, to persuade us that we have not that communion with Christ, which we know we have every day. Although I have a very mean persuasion of my own abilities, yet I must needs say, I cannot think that any man in the world can convince me, that I do not love Jesus Christ in sincerity, because I do not love the pope, as he is so. Spiritual experience is a security against a more cunning sophister, than any Jesuit in the world, with whom the saints of God have to deal all their lives; Eph. vi. 12. And doubtless through the rich grace of our God, help will arise to us, that we shall never make a covenant with these men for peace, upon conditions far worse than those that Nabash would have exacted on the men of Jabesh Gilead, which were but the loss of one eye with an abiding reproach; they requiring of us, the deprivation of whatsoever we have to see by, whether as men or Christians, and that with a reproach never to be blotted out.

But as we daily put our consciences upon trial as to this thing, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. and are put unto it by Satan; so are we ready at all times to give an account to our adversaries of the hope that is in us. Let them sift us to the utmost, it will be to our advantage. Only let them not bring frivolous objections, and such as they know are of no weight with us; speaking (as is their constant manner), about the pope and their church, things utterly foreign to what we are presently about, miserably begging the thing in question. Let them weigh, if they are able, the true nature of union with Christ, of faith in him, of love to the saints; consider them in their proper causes, adjuncts, and effects with a spiritual eye, laying aside their prejudices and intolerable impositions; if we are found wanting as to the truth and sincerity of these things, if we cannot give some account of our translation from death to life, of our implantation into Christ, and our participation of the Spirit, we must bear our own burden; if otherwise, we stand fast on the most noble and best account of church-union whatever; and whilst this shield is safe, we are less anxious about the issue of the ensuing contest. Whatever may be the apprehensions of *other men,* I am not in this thing solicitous (I speak not of

myself, but assuming for the present the person of one concerning whom these things may be spoken), whilst the efficacy of the gospel accomplisheth in my heart all those divine and mighty effects, which are ascribed unto it as peculiarly it works towards them that believe; whilst I know this one thing, that whereas I was blind, now I see; whereas I was a servant of sin, I am now free to righteousness, and at liberty from bondage unto death; and instead of the fruits of the flesh, I find all the fruits of the Spirit brought forth in me to the praise of God's glorious grace; whilst I have an experience of that powerful work of conversion, and being born again, which I am able to manage against all the accusations of Satan, having peace with God upon justification by faith, with the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost investing me in the privileges of adoption; I shall not certainly be moved with the disputes of men, that would persuade me, I do not belong to the catholic church, because I do not follow this, or that, or any part of men in the world.

But you will say, this you will allow to them also with whom you have to do, that they may be members of the catholic church: I leave other men to stand or fall to their own master; only as to the papal multitude, on the account of several inconsistencies between them, and the members of this church, I shall place some swords in the way, which will reduce their number to an invisible scantling; I might content myself by affirming at once, that upon what hath been spoken, I must exclude from the catholic church all, and every one, whom Bellarmine intends to include in it as such; namely, those who belong to the church as hairs and ill humours to the body of a man. But I add in particular,

1. All wicked and profane persons, of whom the Scripture speaks expressly that they shall not enter into the kingdom of God, are indisputably cut off: whatever they pretend in show at any time in the outward duties of devotion, they have neither faith in Christ, nor love to the saints: and so have part and fellowship neither in the union nor communion of the catholic church.

How great a proportion of that synagogue, whereof we are speaking, *will be taken off* by this sword; of their

popes, princes, prelates, clergy, votaries, and people, and that not by a rule of private surmises, but upon the visible issue of their being servants to sin, haters of God and good men, is obvious to all. Persons of really so much as reformed lives amongst them are like the berries after the shaking of an olive-tree; 1 Cor. vi. 7—10. Rev. xxii. 15.

I find some persons of late, appropriating holiness and regeneration[a] to the Roman party, on this account, that among them only miracles are wrought; which is, say they, the only proof of true holiness. But these men err as their predecessors, 'not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' Amongst all the evidences that are given in Scripture of regeneration, I suppose they will scarcely find this to be one; and they who have no other assurance that they are themselves born of God, but that some of their church work miracles, had need maintain also that no man can be assured thereof in this life. They will find that a broken reed[b] if they lean upon it. Will it evince all the members of their church to be regenerate, or only some? If they say all, I ask then what becomes of Bellarmine's church, which is made up of them who are not regenerate? If some only, I desire to know on what account the miracles of one man may be an evidence to some in his society that they are regenerate and not to others? or whether the foundation of that distinction must not lie in themselves? But the truth is, the miracles now pretended are an evidence of a contrary condition to what these men are willing to own; 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

2. All ignorant persons, into whose hearts God hath not shined, 'to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ,' are to be added to the former account. There is a measure of knowledge of absolute and indispensable necessity to salvation, whereof how short the most of them are, is evident. Among the open abominations of the papal combination, for which they ought to be an abhorrency to mankind, their professed design of keeping the people in ignorance is not the least; Hos. iv. 6. That it was devotion to themselves, and not to God, which they

[a] Ille cœtus Christianorum qui solus in orbe claret regeneratis est ecclesia; solus cœtus Christianorum papæ subditorum claret regeneratis; ergo. prob. apud illos solos sunt qui miracula faciunt. ergo. Val. Mag.

[b] Deut. xiii. 1, 2. Matt. vii. 22, 23. Exod. iii. 7.

aimed to advance thereby, is by experience sufficiently evinced: but that, whose reverence is to be preserved by its being hid, is in itself contemptible. What other thoughts wise men could have of Christian religion in their management of it, I know not. Woe to you Romish clergy, 'for you have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in you hindered.' 'The people hath perished' under your hands 'for want of knowledge;' Zech. xi. 15—17. The figment of an implicit faith, as managed by these men, to charm the spirits and consciences of poor perishing creatures with security in this life, will be found as pernicious to them in the issue, as their purgatory, invented on the same account, will be useless.

3. Add to these all hypocritical self-justiciaries, who seek for a righteousness as it were by the works of the law, which they never attained to, Rom. ix. 31, 32. though they take pains about it; chap. x. 15. Eph. ii. 8—11. By this sword will fall the fattest cattle of their herd. How the hand of the Lord on this account sweeps away their devotionists, and therein takes down the pride of their glory, the day will discover; yet, besides these, there are two other things that will cut them down as the grass falls before the scythe of the mower.

1. The first of these is idolatry: 'Be not deceived, no idolaters shall inherit the kingdom of God;' 1 Cor. vi. 9. 'Without are idolaters;' Rev. xxii. 15. This added to their lives hath made Christian religion, where known only as by them professed, to be an abomination to Jews and Gentiles. Some will one day besides himself answer for Averroe's determining of the case as to his soul: 'Quonian Christiani adorant quod comedunt, anima mea sit cum philosophis.' Whether they are idolaters or no, whether they yield the worship due to the Creator to the creature, hath been sifted to the utmost, and the charge of its evil, which the jealous God doth of all things most abhor, so fastened on them beyond all possibility of escape, that one of the wisest of them hath at length fixed on that most desperate and profligate refuge, that some kind of idolatry is lawful, because Peter mentions 'abominable idolatries,' 1 Pet. iv. 5. who is therein so far from distinguishing of several sorts and

kinds of it to any such purpose, as that he aggravates all sort and kinds of it with the epithet of nefarious, or abominable.

A man may say, What is there almost that they have not committed lewdness in this kind withal? on every hill, and under every green tree is the filth of their abomination found: saints and angels in heaven; images of some that never were; of others that had been better they never had been; bread and wine, cross and nails, altars, wood, and iron, and the pope on earth are by them adored. The truth is, if we have any assurance left us of any thing in the world, that we either see or hear, feel or taste, and so consequently that we are alive, and not other men, the poor Indians who worship a piece of red cloth, are not more gross idolaters than they are.

2. All that worship the beast set up by the dragon, all that receive his mark in their hands, or forehead, are said not to have their 'names written in the book of life of the Lamb,' Rev. xiii. 8. which what aspect it bears towards the visible Roman church, time will manifest.

All these sorts of persons we except against, as those that have no interest in the union of the catholic church. All profane, ignorant, self-justiciaries, all idolaters, worshippers, or adorers of the papal power, if any remain among them, not one way or other visibly separated from them, who fall not under some one or more of these exceptions; as we grant they may be members of the catholic church, so we deny that they are of that which is called the Roman. And I must needs inform others by the way, that whilst the course of their conversation, ignorance of the mystery of the gospel, hatred of good men, contempt of the Spirit of God, his gifts and graces, do testify to the consciences of them that fear the Lord, that they belong not to the church catholic, it renders their rebuking of others, for separating from any instituted church national (as is pretended), or more restrained, very weak and contemptible. All discourses about motes, have a worm at the root, whilst there is a beam lies in the eye. Do men suppose, that a man who hath tasted how gracious the Lord is, and hath by grace obtained communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, walking at peace with God, and in a sense of his

love all his days, filled with the Holy Ghost, and by him with joy unspeakable and glorious in believing, is not strengthened against the rebukes and disputes of men, whom he sees and knows by their fruits, to be destitute of the Spirit of God, uninterested in the fellowship of the gospel, and communion thereof?

CHAP. V.

Of the catholic church visible. Of the nature thereof. In what sense the universality of professors is called a church. Amiraldus's judgment in this business. The union of the church in this sense wherein it consists. Not the same with the union of the church catholic; nor that of a particular instituted church. Not in relation to any one officer, or more, in subordination to one another. Such a subordination not proveable. Τὰ ἀρχαῖα *of the Nicene synod. Of general councils. Union of the church visible not in a general council. The true unity of the universality of professors asserted. Things necessary to this union. Story of a martyr at Bagdat. The apostacy of churches from the unity of the faith. Testimony of Hegesippus vindicated. Papal apostacy. Protestants not guilty of the breach of this unity. The catholic church in the sense insisted on, granted by the ancients. Not a political body.*

The second general notion of the church, as it is usually taken, signifies the universality of men professing the doctrine of the gospel, and obedience to God in Christ, according to it, throughout the world. This is that, which is commonly called the visible catholic church, which now, together with the union which it hath in itself, and how that unity is broken, falls under consideration.

That all professors of the gospel throughout the world, called to the knowledge of Christ by the word, do make up, and constitute his visible kingdom, by their professed subjection to him, and so may be called his church, I grant. That they are precisely so called in Scripture is not unquestionable. What relation it stands in to all particular churches, whether as a genus to its species, or as a totum to its parts, hath lately by many been discussed. I must crave leave to deny that it is capable of filling up, or of being included in, any of these denominations and relations. The universal church we are speaking of, is not a thing that

hath, as such, a specificative form, from which it should be called a universal church; as a particular hath for its ground of being so called. It is but a collection of all that are duly called Christians in respect of their profession; nor are the several particular churches of Christ in the world, so parts and members of any catholic church, as that it should be constituted, or made up by them and of them, for the order and purpose of an instituted church, that is, the celebration of the worship of God, and institutions of Jesus Christ according to the gospel; which to assert, were to overthrow a remarkable difference between the economy of the Old Testament and the New. Nor do I think that particular congregations do stand unto it in the relation of species unto a genus, in which the whole nature of it should be preserved and comprised, which would deprive every one of membership in this universal church, which is not joined actually to some particular church or congregation, than which nothing can be more devoid of truth. To debate the thing in particular, is not my present intention, nor is needful to the purpose in hand.

The sum is, the universal church is not so called upon the same account that a particular church is so called. The formal reason constituting a particular church to be a particular church, is, that those of whom it doth consist, do join together according to the mind of Christ in the exercise of the same numerical ordinances for his worship: and in this sense the universal church cannot be said to be a church, as though it had such a particular form of its own; which that it hath, or should have, is not only false but impossible. But it is so called, because all Christians throughout the world (excepting some individual persons providentially excluded) do, upon the enjoyment of the same preaching of the word, the same sacraments administered in specie, profess one common faith and hope; but to the joint performance of any exercise of religion, that they should hear one sermon together, or partake of one sacrament, or have one officer for their rule and government, is ridiculous to imagine; nor do any profess to think so, as to any of the particulars mentioned, but those only, who have profit by the fable. As to the description of this church, I shall acquiesce in that lately given of it by a very learned

man. Saith he, 'Ecclesia universalis, est communio, seu societas omnium cœtuum' (I had rather he had said, and he had done it more agreeable to principles by himself laid down, 'omnium fidem Christianam profitentium sive illi ad ecclesias aliquas particulares pertineant, sive non pertineant') 'qui religionem Christianam profitentur, consistens in eo, quod tametsi neque exercitia pietatis uno numero frequentent, neque sacramenta eadem numero participent, neque uno eodemque omnino ordine regantur, et gubernentur, unum tamen corpus in eo constituunt, quod eundem Christum servatorem habere se profitentur, uno in evangelio propositum, iisdem promissionibus comprehensum, quas obsignant, et confirmant sacramenta, ex eadem institutione pendentia.' Amyrald. Thes. de Eccles. nom et. defin. The. 29.

There being then in the world a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, kindreds, people, and languages, professing the doctrine of the gospel, not tied to mountains or hills, John iv. but worshipping ἐν πάντι τόπῳ; 1 Cor. i. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 8. let us consider what union there is amongst them as such, wrapping them all in the bond thereof, by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ; and wherein the breach of that union doth consist, and how any man is or may be guilty thereof.

I suppose this will be granted: that only elect believers belong to the church in this sense considered, is a chimera feigned in the brains of the Romanists, and fastened on the reformed divines. I wholly assent to Austin's dispute on this head against the Donatists: and the whole entanglement that hath been about this matter, hath arisen from obstinacy in the Papists in not receiving the catholic church in the sense mentioned before; which to do, they know would be injurious to their interest.

This church being visible and professing, and being now considered under that constituting difference, that the union of it cannot be the same with that of the catholic church before mentioned, it is clear from hence, that multitudes of men belong unto it, who have not the relation mentioned before to Christ and his body; which is required in all comprehended in that union; seeing 'many are called, but few are chosen.' Nor can it consist in a joint assembly, either

ordinary or extraordinary, for the celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, or any one of them, as was the case of the church of the Jews, which met at set times in one place for the performance of that worship which was then required, nor could otherwise be accomplished. For as it is not at all possible, that any such thing should ever be done, considering what is, and shall be, the estate of Christ's visible kingdom to the end of the world; so it is not (that I know of) pleaded, that Christ hath made any such appointment: yea, it is on all hands confessed, at least cannot reasonably be denied, that there is a supersedeas granted to all supposals of any such duty, incumbent on the whole visible church, by the institution of particular churches, wherein all the ordinances of Christ are duly to be administered.

I shall only add, that if there be not an institution for the joining in the same numerical ordinances, the union of this church is not really a church-union: I mean, of an instituted church, which consists therein, but something of another nature. Neither can that have the formal reason of an instituted church as such, which as such can join in no one act of the worship of God instituted to be performed in such societies: so that he that shall take into his thoughts the condition of all the Christians in the world; their present state, what it hath been for fifteen hundred years, and what it is like to be ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, will easily understand, what church-state they stand in, and relate unto.

3. It cannot possibly have its union by a relation to any one officer given to the whole, such a one as the Papists pretend the pope to be. For though it be possible that one officer may have relation to all the churches in the world, as the apostles severally had (when Paul said the care of all the churches lay on him), who by virtue of their apostolical commission were to be received, and submitted to in all the churches in the world, being antecedent in office to them; yet this neither did, nor could make all the churches one church; no more than if one man were an officer or magistrate in every corporation in England, this would make all those corporations to be one corporation. I do not suppose the pope to be an officer to the whole church visible as such,

which I deny to have a union or order capable of any such thing; but suppose him an officer to every particular church, no union of the whole would thence ensue. That which is one church must join at least in some one church act, numerically one. So that though it should be granted that the pope were a general officer unto all and every church in the world, yet this would not prove, that they all made one church, and had their church-union in subjection to him, who was so an officer to them all; because to the constitution of such a union as hath been shewed, there is that required, which in reference to the universal society of Christians, is utterly and absolutely impossible. But the non-institution of any such officer ordinarily to bear rule in and over all the churches of God, hath been so abundantly proved by the divines of the reformed churches, and he who alone puts in his claim to that prerogative so clearly manifested to be quite another thing, that I will not needlessly go over that work again; something however shall afterward be remarked, as to his pretensions, from the principles whereon I proceed in the whole business.

There is indeed by some pleaded a subordination of officers in this church, tending towards a union on that account; as that ordinary ministers should be subjected to diocesan bishops, they to archbishops or metropolitans, they again to patriarchs; where some would bound the process, though a parity of reason would call for a pope. Nor will the arguments pleaded for such a subordination rest, until they come to be centred in some such thing.

But, (1.) Before this plea be admitted, it must be proved, that all these officers are appointed by Jesus Christ, or it will not concern us, who are inquiring solely after his will, and the settling of conscience therein. To do this with such an evidence, that the consciences of all those who are bound to yield obedience to Jesus Christ may appear to be therein concerned, will be a difficult task, as I suppose. And to settle this once for all, I am not dealing with the men of that lazy persuasion, that church affairs are to be ordered by the prudence of our civil superiors and governors, and so seeking to justify a non-submission to any of their constitutions, in the things of this nature, or to evi-

dence that the so doing is not schism; nor do I concern myself in the order and appointment of ancient times, by men assembled in synods and councils, wherein whatever was the force of their determinations in their own seasons, we are not at all concerned, knowing of nothing that is obligatory to us, not pleading from sovereign authority, or our own consent, but it is after things of pure institution that I am inquiring. With them who say there is no such thing in these matters, we must proceed to other principles than any yet laid down.

Also it must be proved, that all these officers are given, and do belong to the catholic church as such, and not to the particular churches of several measures and dimensions to which they relate; which is not as yet, that I know of, so much as pretended by them that plead for this order. They tell us indeed of various arbitrary distributions of the world, or rather of the Roman empire into patriarchates, with the dependent jurisdictions mentioned; and that all within the precincts of those patriarchates must fallwithin the lines of the subordination, subjection, and communication before described; but as there is no subordination between the officers of one denomination in the inferior parts, no more is there any between the superior themselves, but they are independent of each other. Now it is easily discernible that these patriarchates, how many or how few soever they are, are particular churches, not any one of them the catholic, nor altogether comprising all that are comprehended in the precincts of it (which none will say that ever they did), and therefore this may speak something as to a combination of those churches, nothing as to the union of the catholic as such, which they are not.

Supposing this assertion to the purpose in hand, which it is not at all, it would prove only a combination of all the officers of several churches, consisting in the subordination and dependence mentioned, not of the whole church itself, though all the members of it should be at once imagined or fancied (as what shall hinder men from fancying what they please?) to be comprised within the limits of those distributions, unless it be also proved that Christ hath instituted several sorts of particular churches, parochial, diocesan, metropolitical, patriarchal (I use the words in the present

vulgar acceptation, their signification having been somewhat otherwise formerly; 'parœcia' being the care of a private bishop, 'provincia' of a metropolitan, and 'diocesis' of a patriarch), in the order mentioned, and hath pointed out which of his churches shall be of those several kinds throughout the world; which that it will not be done to the disturbance of my principles, whilst I live, I have some present good security.

And because I take the men of this persuasion to be charitable men, that will not think much of taking a little pains for the reducing any person whatever from the error of his way, I would entreat them that they would inform me what patriarchate, according to the institution of Christ, I (who by the providence of God live here at Oxon) do 'de jure' belong unto; that so I may know how to preserve the union of that church, and to behave myself therein; and this I shall promise them, that if I were singly, or in conjunction with any others, so considerable, that those great officers should contend about whose subjects we should be (as was done heretofore about the Bulgarians), that it should not at all startle me about the truth and excellency of Christian religion, as it did those poor creatures, who being newly converted to the faith, knew nothing of it but what they received from men of such principles.

But that this constitution is human, and the distributions of Christians in subjection unto church-officers, into such and such divisions of nations and countries prudential and arbitrary, I suppose will not be denied. The τὰ ἀρχαῖα of the Nicene synod intends no more; nor is any thing of institution, nor so much as of apostolical tradition pleaded therein. The following ages were of the same persuasion. Hence in the council of Chalcedon, the archiepiscopacy of Constantinople was advanced into a patriarchate, and many provinces cast in subjection thereunto, wherein the primates of Ephesus and Thrace were cut short of what they might plead τὰ ἀρχαῖα for. And sundry other alterations were likewise made in the same kind; Socrat. lib. 5. cap. 8. The ground and reason of which procedure, the fathers assembled sufficiently manifest in the reason assigned for the advancement of the bishops of Constantinople, which was for the city's sake διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νέαν Ρώμην, Can. 3. Con. Con-

stan. And what was the judgment of the council of Chalcedon upon this matter may be seen in the composition and determination of the strife between Maximus bishop of Antioch, and Juvenalis of Jerusalem, Ac. 7. Con. Cal. with translation of provinces from the jurisdiction of one to another. And he that shall suppose that such assemblies as these were instituted by the will and appointment of Christ in the gospel, with church-authority for such dispositions and determinations, so as to make them of concernment to the unity of the church, will, if I mistake not, be hardly bestead in giving the ground of that his supposal.

4. I would know of them who desire to be under this law, whether the power with which Jesus Christ hath furnished the officers of his church come forth from the supreme mentioned patriarchs and archbishops, and is by them communicated to the inferiors, or 'vice versa;' or whether all have their power in an equal immediation from Christ; if the latter be granted, there will be a greater independency established than most men are aware of (though the Papalins understood it in the council of Trent), and a wound given to successive episcopal ordination, not easily to be healed. That power is communicated from the inferiors to the superiors will not be pleaded. And seeing the first must be insisted on, I beseech them not to be too hasty with men not so sharp-sighted as themselves, if finding the names they speak of barbarous and foreign as to the Scriptures, and the things themselves not at all delineated therein, ἐπέχουσι.

5. The truth is, the whole subordination of this kind, which 'de facto' hath been in the world, was so clearly a human invention, or a prudential constitution, as hath been shewed (which being done by men professing authority in the church, gave it, as it was called, 'vim ecclesiasticam'), that nothing else in the issue is pleaded for it. And now though I shall, if called thereunto, manifest both the unreasonableness and unsuitableness to the design of Christ for his worship under the gospel, comparative novelty and mischievous issue of that constitution; yet, at the present, being no farther concerned, but only to evince that the union of the general visible church doth not therein consist, I shall not need to add any thing to what hath been spoken.

The Nicene council, which first made towards the con-

firmation of something, like somewhat of what was afterward introduced in some places, pleaded only, as I said before, the τὰ ἀρχαῖα, old usage for it, which it would not have done, could it have given a better original thereunto. And whatever the antiquities then pretended might be, we know that ἀπ' ἀρχῆς οὐκ ἦν οὕτως. And I do not fear to say, what others have done before me, concerning the canons of that first and best general council, as it is called, they are all hay and stubble; nor yet doth the laying this custom on τὰ ἀρχαῖα, in my apprehension, evince their judgment of any long prescription. Peter, speaking of a thing that was done a few years before, says, that it was done ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων, Acts xv. 7. somewhat a greater antiquity, than that by him intended, I can freely grant to the custom by the fathers pretended.

But a general council is pleaded with the best colour and pretence for a bond of union to this general and visible church. In consideration hereof, I shall not divert to the handling of the rise, right use, authority, necessity of such councils, about all which, somewhat in due time towards satisfaction may be offered to those who are not in bondage to names and traditions. Nor shall I remark what hath been the management of the things of God in all ages in those assemblies, many of which have been the stains and ulcers of Christian religion. Nor yet shall I say, with what little disadvantage to the religion of Jesus Christ, I suppose a loss of all the canons of all councils that ever were in the world, since the apostle's days, with their acts and contests (considering what use is made of them) might be undergone. Nor yet shall I digress to the usefulness of the assemblies of several churches in their representatives, to consider and determine about things of common concernment to them, with their tendency to the preservation of that communion, which ought to be amongst them; but as to the present instance only offer,

1. That such general councils, being things purely extraordinary and occasional (as is confessed), cannot be an ordinary standing bond of union to the catholic church; and if any one shall reply, that though in themselves, and in their own continuance they cannot be so, yet in their authority, laws, and *canons they* may: I must say, that be-

sides the very many reasons I have to call into question the power of law-making for the whole society of Christians in the world, in all the general councils that have been, or possibly can be on the earth; the dispute about the title of those assemblies, which pretend to this honour, which are to be admitted, which excluded, are so endless; the rules of judging them so dark, lubricous, and uncertain, framed to the interest of contenders on all hands; the laws of them, which 'de facto' have gone under that title and name, so innumerable, burdensome, uncertain, and frivolous; in a great part so grossly contradictory to one another; that I cannot suppose that any man, upon second thoughts, can abide in such an assertion. If any shall, I must be bold to declare my affection to the doctrine of the gospel maintained in some of those assemblies, for some hundreds of years, and then to desire him to prove, that any general council, since the apostles fell asleep, hath been so convened, and managed, as to be enabled to claim that authority to itself, which is, or would be due to such an assembly, instituted according to the mind of Christ.

That it hath been of advantage to the truth of the gospel, that godly learned men, bishops of churches, have convened, and witnessed a good confession in reference to the doctrine thereof, and declared their abhorrence of the errors that are contrary thereunto, is confessed. That any man, or men, is, are, or ever were, intrusted by Christ with authority so to convene them, as that thereupon, and by virtue thereof, they should be invested with a new authority, power, and jurisdiction, at such a convention, and thence should take upon them to make laws and canons, that should be ecclesiastically binding to any persons, or churches, as theirs, is not as yet to me attended with any convincing evidence of truth. And seeing at length it must be spoken, I shall do it with submission to the thoughts of good men, that are any way acquainted with these things, and in sincerity therein commend my conscience to God; that I do not know any thing that is extant, bearing clearer witness to the sad degeneracy of Christian religion in the profession thereof, nor more evidently discovering the efficacy of another spirit than what was poured out by Christ at his ascension, nor containing

more hay and stubble, that is to be burned and consumed, than the stories of the acts and laws of the councils and synods, that have been in the world.

2. But to take them as they are, as to that alone wherein the first councils had any evidence of the presence of the Holy Ghost with them, namely, in the declaring the doctrine of the gospel; it falls in with that which I shall give in for the bond of union unto the church in the sense pleaded about.

3. Such an assembly arising cumulative out of particular churches, as it is evident that it doth, it cannot first and properly belong to the church general, as such; but it is only a means of communion between those particular churches as such, of whose representative (I mean virtually, for formally the persons convening for many years ceased to be so) it doth consist.

4. There is nothing more ridiculous than to imagine a general council, that should represent the whole catholic church, or so much as all the particular churches that are in the world; and let him that is otherwise minded, that there hath been such a one, or that it is possible there should be such a one, prove by instance, that such there hath been since the apostles' times; or by reason, that such may be in the present age, or be justly expected in those that are to succeed, and we will, as we are able, crown him for his discovery.

5. Indeed I know not how any council, that hath been in the world these thirteen hundred years and somewhat upwards, could be said to represent the church in any sense, or any churches whatever. Their convention, as is known, hath been always by imperial or papal authority; the persons convened such, and only they who, as was pretended and pleaded, had right of suffrage, with all necessary authority in such conventions, from the order, degree, and office, which personally they hold in their several churches. Indeed a pope or bishop sent his legate, or proxy, to represent, or rather personate him, and his authority. But that any of them were sent, or delegated by the church wherein they did preside, is not so evident.

I desire then, that some man more skilled in laws and common usages *than myself, would* inform me, on what ac-

count such a convention could come to be a church-representative, or the persons of it to be representatives of any churches; general grounds of reason and equity, I am persuaded, cannot be pleaded for it. The lords in parliament in this nation, who being summoned by regal authority, sat there in their own personal right, were never esteemed to represent the body of the people. Supposing indeed all church-power in any particular church, of whatever extract or composition, to be solely vested in one single person; a collection of those persons, if instituted, would bring together the authority of the whole. But yet this would not make that assembly to be a church-representative, if you will allow the name of the church to any but that single person. But for men, who have but a partial power and authority in the church, and perhaps separated from it, none at all, without any delegation from the churches to convene, and in their own authority to take upon them to represent those churches, is absolute presumption.

These several pretensions being excluded, let us see wherein the unity of this church, namely, of the great society of men professing the gospel, and obedience to Christ, according to it, throughout the world, doth consist; this is summed up by the apostle, Eph. iv. 5. 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism.' It is the unity of the doctrine of faith, which men profess, in subjection to one Lord Jesus Christ, being initiated into that profession by baptism; I say, the saving doctrine of the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ, and obedience through him to God as professed by them, is the bond of that union, whereby they are made one body, are distinguished from all other societies, have one head Christ Jesus, which as to profession they hold, and whilst they do so, are of this body, in one professed hope of their calling.

1. Now that this union be preserved, it is required that all those grand and necessary truths of the gospel, without the knowledge whereof no man can be saved by Jesus Christ, be so far believed, as to be outwardly and visibly professed in that variety of ways, wherein they are, or may be called out thereunto. There is a 'proportion of faith;' Rom. xii. 6. a 'unity of faith, and of knowledge of the Son of God;' *Eph. iv.* 13. a measure of saving truths, the explicit know-

ledge whereof in men, enjoying the use of reason within, and the means of grace without, is of indispensible necessity to salvation, without which it is impossible that any soul in an ordinary way should have communion with God in Christ, having not light sufficient for converse with him, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. These are commonly called fundamentals, or first principles, which are justly argued by many to be clear, perspicuous, few, lying in an evident tendency to obedience. Now look what truths are savingly to be believed, to render a man a member of the church catholic invisible; that is, whatever is required in any one, unto such a receiving of Jesus Christ, as that thereby he may have power given to him to become the Son of God; the profession of those truths is required, to instate a man in the unity of the church visible.

2. That no other internal principle of the mind, that hath an utter inconsistency with the real belief of the truths necessary to be professed, be manifested by professors. Paul tells us of some, who, though they would be called Christians, yet they so walked as that they manifested themselves to be 'enemies of the cross of Christ;' Phil. iii. 18. Certainly those who, on one account, are open and manifest enemies of the cross of Christ, are not on any, members of his church: there is 'one Lord,' and 'one faith' required, as well as 'one baptism;' and a protestation contrary to evidence of fact, is in all law, null. Let a man profess ten thousand times, that he believes all the saving truths of the gospel, and by the course of a wicked and profane conversation evidence to all, that he believes no one of them, shall his protestation be admitted? shall he be accounted a servant in and of my family, who will call me master, and come into my house only to do me and mine a mischief, not doing any thing I require of him, but openly and professedly the contrary? Paul says of such, Tit. v. 15, 16. 'They profess that they know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate;' which though peculiarly spoken of the Jews, yet contains a general rule, that men's profession of the knowledge of God, contradicted by a course of wickedness, is not to be admitted, as a thing giving any privilege whatever.

3. *That no thing, opinion,* error, or false doctrine, evert-

ing or overthrowing any of the necessary saving truths professed as above, be added in and with that profession, or deliberately be professed also. This principle the apostle lays down and proves, Gal. v. 3, 4. notwithstanding the profession of the gospel, he tells the Galatians, that if they were bewitched to profess also the necessity of circumcision, and keeping of the law for justification, that Christ or the profession of him would not profit them. On this account the ancients excluded many heretics from the name of Christians; so Justin of the Marcionites and others, *ὧν οὐδενὶ κοινωνοῦμεν οἱ γνωρίζοντες ἀθέους καὶ ἀσεβεῖς, καὶ ἀδίκους, καὶ ἀνόμους αὐτοὺς ὑπάρχοντας, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ τὸν Ἰησοῦν σέβειν ὀνόματι μόνον ὁμολογεῖν καὶ Χριστιανοὺς ἑαυτοὺς λέγουσιν, ὃν τρόπον οἱ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπιγράφουσι τοῖς χειροποιήτοις.*

We are at length then arrived to this issue; the belief and profession of all the necessary saving truths of the gospel, without the manifestation of an internal principle of the mind, inconsistent with the belief of them, or adding of other things in profession, that are destructive to the truths so professed, is the bond of the unity of the visible professing church of Christ. Where this is found in any man, or number of men, though otherwise accompanied with many failings, sins, and errors, the unity of the faith is by him or them so far preserved, as that they are thereby rendered members of the visible church of Christ, and are by him so esteemed.

Let us suppose a man by a bare reading of the Scriptures, brought to him by some providence of God (as finding the Bible in the highway), and evidencing their authority by their own light, instructed in the knowledge of the truths of the gospel, who shall thereupon make profession of them amongst them with whom he lives, although he be thousands of miles distant from any particular church wherein the ordinances of Christ are administered; nor perhaps knows there is any such church in the world, much less hath ever heard of the pope of Rome (which is utterly impossible he should, supposing him instructed only by reading of the Scriptures); I ask whether this man, making open profession of Christ according to the gospel, shall be esteemed a member of the visible church in the sense insisted on or no?

That this may not seem to be such a fiction of a case as *may involve* in it any impossible supposition, which being

granted, will hold a door open for other absurdities; I shall exemplify it in its most material 'postulata' by a story of unquestionable truth.

Elmacinus, who wrote the story of the Saracens, being secretary to one of the caliphs of Bagdad, informs us, that in the year 309 of their Hegira, about the year 921 of our account, Muctadinus the caliph of Bagdad by the counsel of his wise men, commanded one Huseinus the son of Manor to be crucified for certain poems, whereof some verses are recited by the historian, and are thus rendered by Erpenius:

'Laus ei qui manifestavit humilitatem suam, celavit inter nos divinitatem suam permeantem donec cœpit in creatura sua apperere sub specie edentis et bibentis;

'Jamque aspexit eum creatura ejus, sicuti supercilium obliquum respiciat spercilium.'

From which remnant of his work it is easily to perceive, that the crime whereof he was accused, and for which he was condemned and crucified, was the confession of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As he went to the cross he added, says the same author, these that follow:

'Compotur mens nihil plane habet in se iniquitatis, bibendum mihi dedit simile ejus quod bibit fecit hospitem in hospite.'

And so died constantly (as it appears) in the profession of the Lord Jesus.

Bagdad was a city built not long before by the Saracens, wherein it is probable there were not at that time any Christians abiding: add now to this story what our Saviour speaks, Luke xii. 8. 'I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God;' and considering the unlimitedness of the expression as to any outward consideration, and tell me whether this man, or any other in the like condition, be not to be reckoned as a subject of Christ's visible kingdom, a member of his church in the world.

Let us now recall to mind what we have in design. Granting for our process' sake, that schism is the breach of any unity instituted and appointed by Christ, in what sense soever it is spoken of, our inquiry is, whether we are guilty in *any kind of such a breach, or* the breach of such a unity.

This then now insisted on being the union of the church of Christ, as visibly professing the word, according to his own mind, when I have laid down some general foundations of what is to ensue, I shall consider whether we are guilty of the breach of this union, and argue the several pretensions of men against us, especially of the Romanists, on this account.

1. I confess that this union of the general visible church was once comprehensive of all the churches in the world; the faith once delivered to the saints being received amongst them. From this unity it is taken also for granted, that a separation is made, and it continues not as it was at the first institution of the churches of Christ, though some small breaches were made upon it immediately after their first planting. The Papists say, as to the European churches (wherein their and our concernment principally lies), this breach was made in the days of our forefathers; by their departure from the common faith in those ages, though begun by a few some ages before. We are otherwise minded, and affirm, that this succession was made by them, and their predecessors in apostacy, in several generations by several degrees; which we manifest by comparing the present profession and worship with that in each kind which we know was at first embraced, because we find it instituted. At once then, we say this schism lies at their doors, who not only have deviated from the common faith themselves, but do also actually cause and attempt to destroy temporally and eternally all that will not join with them therein. For as the mystery of iniquity began to work in the apostles' days, so we have a testimony beyond exception in the complaint of those that lived in them, that not long after the operation of it became more effectual, andthe infection of it to be more diffused in the church. This is that of Hegesippus in Eusebius Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 26. who affirms that the church remained a virgin (whilst the apostles lived) pure and uncorrupted; but when that sacred society had ended its pilgrimage, and the generation that heard and received the word from them were fallen asleep, many false doctrines were preached and divulged therein.

I know who hath endeavoured to elude the sense of this *complaint*, as though it concerned not any thing in the

church, but the despisers and persecutors of it, the Gnostics. But yet I know also, that no man would so do but such a one as hath a just confidence of his own ability to make passable at least any thing that he shall venture to say or utter. For why should that be referred by Hegesippus to the ages after the apostles and their hearers were dead, with an exception against its being so in their days; when, if the person thus expounding this testimony may be credited, the Gnostics were never more busy nor prevalent than in that time which alone is excepted from the evil here spoken of. Nor can I understand how the opposition and persecution of the church should be insinuated to be the deflowering and violating of its chastity, which is commonly a great purifying of it; so that speaking of that broaching and preaching of errors, which was not in the apostles' times, nor in the time of their hearers, the chiefest time of the rage and madness of the Gnostics; such as spotted the pure and uncorrupted virginity of the church, which nothing can attain unto that is foreign unto it, and that which gave original unto sedition in the church: I am of the mind, and so I conceive was Eusebius that recited those words, that the good man intended corruptions in the church, not out of it, nor oppositions to it.

The process made in after ages, in a deviation from the unity of the faith, till it arrived to that height wherein it is now stated in the Papal apostacy, hath been the work of others to declare; therein then I stated the rise and progress of the present schism (if it may be so called) of the visible church.

2. As to our concernment in this business, they that will make good a charge against us, that we are departed from the unity of the church catholic, it is incumbent on them to evidence that we either do not believe and make profession of all the truths of the gospel indispensably necessary to be known, that a man may have a communion with God in Christ and be saved. Or,

2. That doing so, in the course of our lives we manifest and declare a principle that is utterly inconsistent with the belief of those truths which outwardly we profess. Or,

3. That we add unto them, in opinion or worship, that, or *those things, which are in very* deed destructive of them,

or do any way render them insufficient to be saving unto us. If neither of these three can be proved against a man, he may justly claim the privilege of being a member of the visible church of Christ in the world, though he never in all his life be a member of a particular church; which yet, if he have fitting opportunity and advantage for it, is his duty to be.

And thus much be spoken as to the state and condition of the visible catholic church, and in this sense we grant it to be, and the unity thereof. In the late practice of men, that expression of the catholic church hath been an 'individuum vagum,' few knowing what to make of it, a 'cothurnus,' that every one accommodated at pleasure to his own principles and pretensions. I have no otherwise described it than did Irenæus of old: said he, 'Judicabit omnes eos, qui sunt extra veritatem, id est, extra ecclesiam;' lib. 4. cap. 62. and on the same account, is a particular church sometimes called by some, the catholic: 'Quandoque ego Remigius episcopus de hac luce transiero, tu mihi hæres esto, sancta et venerabilis ecclesia catholica urbis remorum;' Flodoardus, lib. 1.

In the sense insisted on was it so frequently described by the ancients.

So again Irenæus: 'Etsi in mundo loquelæ dissimiles sunt, sed tamen virtus traditionis una et eadem est, et neque hæ, quæ in Germania sunt fundatæ, ecclesiæ aliter credunt, aut aliter tradunt, neque hæ, quæ in Hibernis sunt, neque hæ quæ in Celtis, neque hæ, quæ in Oriente, neque hæ quæ in Ægypto, neque hæ quæ in Lybia, neque hæ quæ in medio mundi constitutæ: Sed sicut sol creatura Dei in universo mundo unus et idem est, sic et lumen et prædicatio veritatis ubique lucet;' lib. 1. cap 3. To the same purpose Justin Martyr, Οὐδὲ ἓν γὰρ ὅλως ἐστὶ τὸ γενὸς ἀνθρώπων εἴτε βαρβάρων, εἴτε Ελλήνων, εἴτε ἁπλῶς, ὡτινίουν ὀνόματι προσαγορευομένων ἢ ἀμαξοβίων, ἢ ἀοίκων καλουμένον, ἢ ἐν σκηναῖς κτηνοτρόφων οἰκώντων ἐν ὃις μὴ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ σταυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαῖ καὶ εὐχαριστίαι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνωνται. Dialog. cum Tryphone.

The generality of all sorts of men worshipping God in Jesus Christ, is the church we speak of; whose extent in his days Tertullian thus related: 'In quem alium credide*runt gentes universæ*, nisi in ipsum, qui jam venit? Cui

enim alii, gentes crediderunt, Parthi, Medi, et Elamitæ, et qui habitant Mesopotamiam, Armeniam, Phrygiam, et immorantes Egyptum et regionem Africæ, quæ est trans Cyrenem Romani, at incolæ tunc, et in Hierusalem Judæi et gentes cæteræ, ut jam Getulonum varietates et Maurorum nulli fines Hispanarum omnes termini, et Galliarum diversæ nationes et Brittanorum inaccessa loca Romanis, Christo vero subdita et Sarmatarum et Dacorum et Germanorum et Scytharum et abditarum multarum gentium et provinciarum et insularum multarum nobis ignotarum, et quæ enumerare non possumus, in quibus omnibus locis Christi nomen, qui jam venit, regnat ad Judæos.'

Some have said, and do yet say, that the church in this sense is a visible, organical, political body. That it is visible is confessed, both its matter and form bespeak visibility, as an inseparable adjunct of its subsisting. That it is a body also in the general sense wherein that word is used, or a society of men embodied by the profession of the same faith, is also granted. Organical, in this business, is an ambiguous term; the use of it is plainly metaphorical, taken from the members, instruments, and organs of a natural body; because Paul hath said, that in 'one body there are many members,' as eyes, feet, hands, yet the body is but one; so is the church. It hath been usually said, that the church is an organical body: what church Paul speaks of in that place is not evident; but what he alludes unto, is. The difference he speaks of, in the individual persons of the church, is not in respect of office, power, and authority, but gifts or graces, and usefulness on that account; such an organical body we confess the church catholic visible to be; in it are persons endued with variety of gifts and graces for the benefit and ornament of the whole.

An organical political body is a thing of another nature; a politic body or commonwealth, is a society of a certain portion of mankind united under some form of rule, or government, whose supreme and subordinate administration is committed to several persons, according to the tenor of such laws and customs as that society hath, or doth consent unto. This also is said to be organical on a metaphorical account, because the officers and members that are in it, and over it,

hold proportion to the more noble parts of the body. Kings are said to be heads, counsellors ὀφθαλμοὶ βασιλέων: to the constitution of such a commonwealth distinctly, as such, it is required that the whole hath the same laws; but not that only. Two nations most distinct and different, on the account of other ends and interests, may yet have the same individual laws and customs for the distribution of justice, and preservation of peace among themselves. An entire form of regimen and government peculiar thereunto is required for the constitution of a distinct political body. In this sense we deny the church whereof we speak to be an organical, political body, as not having indeed any of the requisites thereunto. Not one law of order; the same individual moral law, or law for moral duties it hath; but a law given to the whole as such, for order, polity, rule, it hath not. All the members of it are obliged to the same law of order and polity in their several societies; but the whole, as such, hath no such law: it hath no such head or governor as such; nor will it suffice to say, that Christ is its head; for if, as a visible political body, it hath a political head, that head also must be visible. The commonwealth of the Jews was a political body; of this God was the head and king: hence their historian saith their government was Θεοκρατία; and when they would choose a king, God said they rejected him who was their political head; to whom a shekel was paid yearly as tribute, called the 'shekel of the sanctuary.' Now they rejected him, not by asking a king simply, but a king after the manner of the nations; yet, that it might be a visible political body, it required a visible supreme magistrate to the whole; which when there was none, all polity was dissolved amongst them; Judges xxi. Christ is the head of every particular church, its lawgiver, and ruler: but yet to make a church a visible, organical, political body, it is required that it hath visible governors and rulers, and of the whole. Nor can it be said that it is a political body that hath a supreme government and order in it, as it is made up and constituted of particular churches; and that in the representatives convened doth the supreme visible power of it consist; for such a convention in the judgment of all ought to be extraordinary only; in ours is utterly impossible, and 'de facto' was not among the churches for

three hundred years, yea, never: besides, the visible catholic church is not made up of particular churches as such; for if so, then no man can be member of it but by virtue of his being a member of some visible church, which is false: profession of the truth, as before stated, is the formal reason and cause of any person's relation to the church visible, which he hath thereby, whether he belong to any particular church or no.

Let it be evidenced, that the universal church whereof we speak hath any law or rule of order and government, as such, given unto it; or that it is in possibility as such, to put any such law or rule into execution; that it hath any homogeneous ruler or rulers that have the care of the administration of the rule and government of the whole, as such, committed to him or them by Jesus Christ; that as it hath the same common spiritual and known orders and interest, and the same specifical ecclesiastical rule given to all its members, so it hath the same political interest, order, and conversation, as such; or that it hath any one cause constitutive of a political body, whereby it is such, or hath at all the form of an instituted church, or is capable of any such form; and they that do so shall be farther attended to.

CHAP. VI.

Romanists' charge of schism on the account of separation from the church catholic proposed to consideration. The importance of this plea on both sides. The sum of their charge. The church of Rome not the church catholic: not a church in any sense. Of antichrist in the temple. The catholic church how intrusted with interpretation of Scripture. Of interpretation of Scripture by tradition. The interest of the Roman church herein discharged. All necessary truths believed by Protestants. No contrary principle by them manifested. Profane persons no members of the church catholic. Of the late Roman proselytes. Of the Donatists. Their business reported, and case stated. The present state of things unsuited to those of old. Apostacy from the unity of the church catholic charged on the Romanists. Their claim to be that church sanguinary, false. Their plea to this purpose considered. The blasphemous management of their plea by some of late. The whole dissolved. Their inferences on their plea practically prodigious. Their apostacy proved by instances. Their grand argument in this cause proposed: answered. Consequences of denying the Roman church, to be a church of Christ, weighed.

LET us see now what as to conscience can be charged on us, Protestants I mean, who are all concerned herein, as to the breach of this union. The Papists are the persons that undertake to manage this charge against us. To lay aside the whole plea 'subesse Romano pontifici,' and all those fears, wherewith they juggled, when the whole world sat in darkness, which they do now use at the entrance of their charge. The sum of what they insist upon firstly, is, The catholic church is intrusted with the interpretation of the Scripture, and declaration of the truths therein contained, which being by it so declared, the not receiving of them implicitly, or explicitly, that is the disbelieving of them as so proposed and declared, cuts off any man from being a member of the church; Christ himself having said, that he that hears not the church, is to be as a heathen man or publican; which church they are, that is certain. It is all one then what we believe, or do not believe, seeing that we believe not all that the catholic church proposeth to be believed, and what we do believe, we believe not on that account.

Ans. Their insisting on this plea so much as they do, is *sufficient to evince* their despair of making good by in-

stance our failure in respect of the way and principles by which the unity of the visible church may be lost or broken. Fail they in this, they are gone; and if they carry this plea, we are all at their disposal. The sum of it is, the catholic church is intrusted with sole power of delivering what is truth, and what is necessary to be believed. This catholic church is the church of Rome; that is, the pope, or what else may in any juncture of time serve their interest. But as it is known,

1. We deny their church, as it is styled, to be the catholic church, or as such, any part of it, as particular churches are called or esteemed. So that of all men in the world, they are least concerned in this assertion. Nay, I shall go farther; suppose all the members of the Roman church to be sound in the faith, as to all necessary truths, and no way to prejudice the advantages and privileges which accrue to them by the profession thereof, whereby the several individuals of it would be true members of the catholic church; yet I should not only deny it to be the catholic church, but also, abiding in its present order and constitution, being that which by themselves it is supposed to be, to be any particular church of Christ at all; as wanting many things necessary to constitute them so, and having many things destructive utterly to the very essence and being of that order that Christ hath appointed in his churches.

The best plea that I know for their church-state, is, that antichrist sits in the temple of God. Now although we might justly omit the examination of this pretence, until those, who are concerned in it, will professedly own it, as their plea; yet as it lies in our way, in the thoughts of some, I say to it, that I am not so certain that καθίσαι εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, signifies to 'sit in the temple of God;' seeing a learned man long ago thought it rather to be a 'setting up against the temple of God;' Aug. de Civitate Dei, lib. 10. cap. 59. But grant the sense of the expression to be, as it is usually received, it imports no more, but that the man of sin shall set up his power against God, in the midst of them, who by their outward visible profession have right to be called his temple, which entitles him, and his copart-

ners in apostacy, to the name of the church, as much as changing of money, and selling of cattle, were ordinances of God under the old temple, when by some men's practising of them in it, it was made a den of thieves.

2. Though as to the plea of them, and their interest, with whom we have to do, we have nothing requiring our judgments in the case; yet 'ex abundanti,' we add, that we deny that by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ the catholic church visible is in any sense intrusted with such an interpretation of Scripture, as that her declaration of truth should be the measure of what should be believed; or that, as such, it is intrusted with any power of that nature at all, or is enabled to propose a rule of faith to be received, as so proposed, to the most contemptible individual in the world; or that it is possible that any voice of it should be heard or understood, but only this, I believe the necessary saving truths contained in the Scripture; or that it can be consulted withal, or is, as such, intrusted with any power, authority, or jurisdiction; nor shall we ever consent, that the office and authority of the Scriptures be actually taken from it, on any pretence. As to that of our Saviour, of telling the church, it is so evidently spoken of a particular church, that may immediately be consulted in case of difference between brethren; and does so no way relate to the business in hand, that I shall not trouble the reader with a debate of it. But do we not receive the Scripture itself upon the authority of the church? I say if we did so, yet this concerns not Rome, which we account no church at all. That we have received the Scripture from the church of Rome at first, that is, so much as the book itself, is an intolerable figment. But it is worse, to say that we receive and own their authority, from the authority of any church, or all the churches in the world. It is the expression of our learned Whitaker, 'Qui Scripturam non credit esse divinam, nisi propter ecclesiæ vocem, Christianus non est.' To deny that the Scripture hath immediate force and efficacy to evince its own authority, is plainly to deny them; on that account being brought unto us, by the providence of God (wherein I comprise all subservient helps of human testimony), we receive them, and on no other.

But is not the Scripture to be interpreted according to the tradition of the catholic church? and are not those interpretations so made to be received?

I say, among all the figments that these latter ages have invented; I shall add, amongst the true stories of Lucian, there is not one more remote from truth than this assertion; that any one text of Scripture may be interpreted according to the universal tradition of the catholic church, and be made appear so to be, any farther than that in general the catholic church hath not believed any such sense to be in any portion of Scripture, which to receive, were destructive of salvation. And therefore the Romanists tell us, that the present church (that is theirs) is the keeper and interpreter of these traditions; or rather, that its power, authority, and infallibility, being the same that it hath been in former ages, what it determines, is to be received to be the tradition of the catholic church; for the trial whereof, whether it be so or no, there is no rule but its own determination; which if they can persuade us to acquiesce in, I shall grant that they have acquired such an absolute dominion over us, and our faith, that it is fit that we should be soul and body at their disposal.

It being then the work of the Scripture to propose the saving truths of Christ (the belief and profession whereof are necessary to make a man a member of the church) so as to make them of indispensable necessity to be received; if they can from them convince us that we do not believe and profess all and every one of the truths or articles of faith so necessary as expressed, we shall fall down under the authority of such conviction; if not, we profess our consciences to be no more concerned in the authority of their church, than we judge their church to be, in the privileges of the church catholic. But,

2. It may be we are chargeable with manifesting some principles of profaneness, wherewith the belief of the truth we profess hath an absolute inconsistency: for those who are liable and obnoxious to this charge, I say, let them plead for themselves; for let them profess what they will, and cry out ten thousand times, that they are Christians, I shall never acknowledge them for others than visible enemies of the *cross, kingdom, and* church of Christ. Traitors

and rebels are not 'de facto' subjects of that king or ruler in reference to whom they are so. Of some, who said they were Jews, Christ said they 'lied, and were not, but the synagoge of Satan;' Rev. ii. 9. Though such as these say they are Christians, I will be bold to say, they lie, they are not, but slaves of Satan. Though they live within the pale, as they call it, of the church (the catholic church being an enclosure as to profession, not place), yet they are not within it, nor of it, any more than a Jew, or Mahometan within the the same precinct: suppose they have been baptized, yet if their belly be their God, and their lives dedicated to Satan, all the advantage they have thereby, is, that they are apostates and renegadoes.

That we have added any thing of our own, making profession of any thing in religion absolutely destructive to the fundamentals we profess, I know not that we are accused, seeing our crime is asserted to consist in detracting, not adding. Now unless we are convinced of failing on one of these three accounts, we shall not at all question but that we abide in the unity of the visible catholic church.

It is the common cry of the Romanists that we are schismatics. Why so? because we have separated ourselves from the communion of the catholic church. What this catholic is, and how little they are concerned in it, hath been declared. How much they have prevailed themselves with ignorant souls by this plea, we know. Nor was any other success to be expected in respect of many whom they have won over to themselves, who being persons ignorant of the righteousness of God, and the power of the faith they have professed; not having had experience of communion with the Lord Jesus, under the conduct of them; have been, upon every provocation and temptation, a ready prey to deceivers.

Take a little view of their late proselytes, and it will quickly appear what little cause they have to boast in them. With some by the craft and folly of some relations they are admitted to treat, when they are drawing to their dissolution. These for the most part having been persons of dissolute and profligate lives; never having tasted the power of any religion; whatever they have professed in their weakness and disturbed dying thoughts, may be apt to receive any impression that with confidence and violence is imposed upon

them. Besides, it is a far easier proposal to be reconciled to the church of Rome, and so by purgatory to get to heaven, than to be told of regeneration, repentance, faith, and the covenant of grace, things of difficulty to such poor creatures. Others that have been cast down from their hopes and expectations, or out from their enjoyments, by the late revolution in these nations, have by their discontent, or necessity, made themselves an easy prey to their zeal. What hath been the residue of their proselytes? What one who hath ever manifested himself to share in the power of our religion, or was not prepared by principles of superstition almost as deep as their own, have they prevailed on? But I shall not farther insist on these things. To return;

Our communion with the visible catholic church is in the unity of the faith only. The breach of this union, and therein a relinquishment of the communion of the church, lies in a relinquishment of, or some opposition to, some or all of the saving necessary truths of the gospel. Now this is not schism, but heresy or apostacy; or it is done by an open profligateness of life: so that indeed this charge is nothing at all to the purpose in hand: though through grace, in a confidence of our own innocency, we are willing to debate the guilt of the crime under any name or title whatever.

Unto what hath been spoken, I shall only add the removal of some common objections, with a recharge on them, with whom principally we have as yet had to do, and come to the last thing proposed. The case of some of old, who were charged with schism for separating from the catholic church on an account wholly and clearly distinct from that of a departure from the faith, is an instance of the judgment of antiquity, lying in an opposition to the notion of departure from the church now delivered. Doth not Augustine, do not the rest of his orthodox contemporaries, charge the Donatists with schism, because they departed from the catholic church? And doth not the charge rise up with equal efficacy against you as them? At least doth it not give you the nature of schism in another sense than is by you granted.

The reader knows sufficiently, if he hath at all taken notice of these things, where to find this cloud scattered, without the least annoyance *or detriment to* the Protestant cause, or *of any concerned in that name*, however by lesser differences

diversified among themselves. I shall not repeat what by others hath been at large insisted on. In brief, put the whole church of God into that condition of liberty and soundness of doctrine, which it was in when the great uproar was made by the Donatists, and we shall be concerned to give in our judgments concerning them.

To press an example of former days, as binding unto duty, or convincing of evil, in respect of any now, without stating the whole 'substratum' of the business, and complete cause, as it was in the days and seasons wherein the example was given, we judge it not equal. Yet although none can with ingenuity press me with the crime they were guilty of, unless they can prove themselves to be instated in the very same condition, as they were against whom that crime was committed, which I am fully assured none in the world can; the communion of the catholic church then pleaded for being, in the judgment of all, an effect of men's free liberty and choice, now pressed as an issue of the tyranny of some few; yet I shall freely deliver my thoughts concerning the Donatists, which will be comprehensive also of those other, that suffer with them in former and after ages under the same imputation.

1. Then, I am persuaded, that in the matter of fact, the Donatists were some of them deceived, and others of them did deceive, in charging Cæcilianus to be ordained by 'traditores;' which they made the main ground of their separation, however they took in other things (as is usual) into their defence afterward. Whether any of themselves were ordained by such persons, as they are recharged, I know not.

2. On supposition that he was so, and they that ordained him were known to him to have been so; yet he being not guilty of the crime, renouncing communion with them therein, and themselves repenting of their sin, as did Peter, whose sin exceeded theirs, this was no just cause of casting him out of communion, he walking and acting in all other things suitable to principles by themselves acknowledged.

3. That on supposition they had just cause hereupon to renounce the communion of Cæcilianus, which according to the principles of those days, retained by themselves, was most false; yet they had no ground of separating from *the church* of Carthage, where were many elders not ob-

noxious to that charge. Indeed to raise a jealousy of a fault in any man, which is denied by him, which we are not able to prove, which, if it were proved, were of little or no importance, and on pretence thereof to separate from all who will not believe what we surmise, is a wild and unchristian course of proceeding.

4. Yet grant farther, that men of tender consciences, regulated by the principle then generally received, might be startled at the communion of that church, wherein Cæcilianus did preside; yet nothing but the height of madness, pride, and corrupt fleshly interest, could make men declare hostility against all the churches of Christ in the world, who would communicate with, or did not condemn that church; which was to regulate all the churches in the world by their own fancy and imagination.

5. Though men out of such pride and folly might judge all the residue of Christians to be faulty and guilty in this particular, of not condemning and separating from the church of Carthage; yet to proceed to cast them out from the very name of Christians, and so disannul their privileges and ordinances, that they had been made partakers of, as manifestly they did, by rebaptizing all that entered into their communion, was such unparalleled pharisaism and tyranny, as was wholly to be condemned, and intolerable.

6. The divisions, outrages, and enthusiastical furies and riots that befell them, or they fell into, in their way, were in my judgment tokens of the hand of God against them: so that, upon the whole matter, their undertaking and enterprise was utterly undue and unlawful.

I shall farther add, as to the management of the cause by their adversaries, that there is in their writings, especially those of Austin, for the most part a sweet and gracious spirit breathing, full of zeal for the glory of God, peace, love, union among Christians; and as to the issue of the cause under debate, it is evident that they did sufficiently foil their adversaries on principles then generally confessed, and acknowledged on all hands, though some of them seem to have been considering, learned, and dexterous men.

How little we are *at this day*, in any contests that are *managed amongst us about the things* of God, concerned

in those differences of theirs, these few considerations will evince, yet notwithstanding all this, I must take liberty to profess, that although the fathers justly charged the Donatists with disclaiming of all the churches of Christ, as a thing wicked and unjust, yet many of the principles whereon they did it were such, as I cannot assent unto. Yea, I shall say, that though Austin was sufficiently clear in the nature of the invisible church catholic, yet his frequent confounding it with a mistaken notion of the visible general church, hath given no small occasion of stumbling, and sundry unhappy entanglements to divers in after ages. His own book 'De Unitate Ecclesiæ,' which contains the sum and substance of what he had written elsewhere, or disputed against the Donatists, would afford me instances enough to make good my assertion, were it now under consideration or proof.

Being then thus come off from this part of our charge and accusation of schism, for the relinquishment of the catholic visible church, which as we have not done, so to do is not schism, but a sin of another nature and importance; according to the method proposed, a recharge on the Romanists, in reference to their present condition and its unsuitableness to the unity of the church, evinced, must briefly ensue.

Their claim is known to be no less, than that they are this catholic church, out of whose communion there is no salvation (as the Donatists was of old): that also the union of this church consists in its subjection to its head the pope, and worshipping of God according to his appointment, in and with his several qualifications and attendences. Now this claim of theirs, to our apprehension and consciences, is,

1. Cruel and sanguinary; condemning millions to hell, that invocate and call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, believing all things that are written in the Old and New Testaments, for no other cause in the world, but because they are not convinced that it is their duty to give up reason, faith, soul, and all to him, and his disposal, whom they have not only unconquerable presumptions against as an evil and wicked person, but are also resolved, and fully persuaded in their consciences, that he is an enemy to their dear Lord Jesus Christ, out of love to whom, they cannot bear him. *Especially will* this appear to be so, if we consider their far-

ther improvement of this principle to the killing, hanging, torturing to death, burning of all that they are able, who are in the condition before mentioned. This upon the matter is the great principle of their religion. All persons that will not be subject (at least in spiritual things) to the pope, are to be hanged or burned in this world, or by other means destroyed, and damned for ever hereafter. This is the substance of the gospel they preach, the centre wherein all the lines of their writings do meet; and to this must the holy, pure word of God be wrested to give countenance. Blessed be the God of our salvation, who as he never gave merciless men power over the souls and eternal condition of his saints, so he hath began to work a deliverance of the outward condition of his people from their rage and cruelty; which in his good time he will perfect in their irrecoverable ruin. In the mean time, I say, the guilt of the blood of millions of innocent persons, yea, saints of God, lies at their doors. And although things are so stated in this age, that in some nations they have left none to kill; in others are restrained, that they can kill no more; yet retaining the same principles with their forefathers, and justifying them in their paths of blood, I look upon them all as guilty of murder, and so not to have eternal life abiding in them; being as Cain of that wicked one, who slew his brother. I speak not of individuals, but of those in general that constitute their governing church.

2. Most false, and such as nothing but either judiciary hardness from God, sending men strong delusions that they might believe a lie, or the dominion of cursed lusts, pride, ambition, covetousness, desire of rule, can lie at the bottom of. For,

1. It is false, that the union of the catholic church, in the notion now under consideration, consists in subjection to any officer or officers; or that it hath any peculiar form, constituting one church in relation to them, or in joint participation of the same individual ordinances whatever, by all the members of it; or that any such oneness is at all possible; or any unity whatever, but that of the faith which by it is believed, and of the truth professed.

2. It is most ridiculous, that they are this catholic church, or that their communion is comprehensive of it in *its latitude. He must be blind,* uncharitable, a judge of

what he cannot see or know, who can once entertain a thought of any such thing. Let us run a little over the foundations of this assertion.

First, Peter was the prince of the apostles. It is denied; arguments lie clear against it. The gospel, the acts of the apostles, all confute it. The express testimony of Paul lies against it; our Saviour denies it, that it was so, gives order that it should not be so. The name and thing is foreign to the times of the apostles. It was a ministry, not a principality, they had committed to them; therein they were all equal. It is from that spirit, whence they inquired after a kingdom and dominion before they had received the Spirit of the gospel, as it was dispensed after Christ's ascension, that such assertions are now insisted on. But let that be supposed, what is next? He had a universal monarchical jurisdiction committed to him over all Christians. For Christ said, 'Tu es Petrus, tibi dabo claves, et pasce oves meas.' But these terms are barbarous to the Scripture; monarchy is not the English of 'vos autem non sic.' Jurisdiction is a name of a right, for the exercise of civil power. Christ hath left no such thing as jurisdiction, in the sense wherein it is now used, to Peter or his church. Men do but make sport and expose themselves to the contempt of considering persons, who talk of the institutions of our Lord, in the language of the last ages; or expressions suitable to what was in practice in them. He that shall compare the fraternal church admonition and censures of the primitive institution, with the courts, powers, and jurisdictions, set up in pretence and colour of them in after ages, will admire at the likeness and correspondency of the one with the other. The administration of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the papacy, and under the prelacy here in England, had no more relation to any institution of Christ (unless it be, that it effectually excluded the exercise of his institutions), than other civil courts of justice among Christians have. Peter had the power and authority of an apostle in and over the churches of Christ, to teach, to instruct them, to ordain elders in them by their consent wherever he came; so had the rest of the apostles. But as to this monarchy of Peter's over the rest of the apostles, let them shew what authority *he ever exercised* over them, while he and they lived to-

gether: we read that he was once reproved by one of them, not that he ever reproved the meanest of them. If Christ made the grant of pre-eminency to him, when he said, 'Tu es Petrus,' why did the apostles inquire afterward, who among them should be greatest? And why did not our Saviour on that dispute plainly satisfy them, that Peter was to be chief? But chose rather to so determine the question, as to evince them of the vanity of any such inquiry? And yet the determination of it is that that lies at the bottom of the papal monarchy. And why doth Paul say, that he was in nothing inferior to any of the apostles, when (if these gentlemen say true), he was in many things inferior to Peter? What special place hath the name of Peter in the foundation of the new Jerusalem? Rev. xxi. 14. What exaltation hath his throne among the twelve, whereon the apostles judge the world, and house of Israel, Matt. xix. 28. What eminency of commission for teaching all nations, or forgiving sins? What had his keys more than those of the rest of the apostles, John xx. 3. What was peculiar in that triple command of feeding the sheep of Christ, but his triple denial, that preceded? Is an injunction for the performance of duty, a grant of new authority? But that we may make some progress, suppose this also; Why, this power, privilege, and jurisdiction of Peter was to be transferred to his successors, when the power of all the other apostles, as such, died with them. But what pretence, or colour of it, is there for this assertion? What one tittle or ἰῶτα is there in the whole book of God, giving the least countenance to this imagination? what distinction between Peter and the rest of the apostles on this account, is once made, or in any kind insinuated? Certainly this was a thing of great importance to the churches, to have been acquainted with it. When Paul so sadly tells the church, that after his departure grievous wolves would spoil the flock, and many among themselves would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them; why did he not give them the least direction to make their address to him, that should succeed Peter in his power and office, for relief and redress? Strange, that it should be of necessity to salvation to be subject to him, in whom this power of Peter *was to be continued*; that he was to be one, in whom

the saints were to be consummated; that in relation to him the unity of the catholic church, to be preserved under pain of damnation, should consist, and yet not a word spoken of him in the whole word of God!

But they say, 'Peter had not only an apostolical power with the rest of the apostles, but also an ordinary power that was to be continued in the church.' But the Scripture being confessedly silent of any such thing, let us hear what proof is tendered for the establishment of this uncouth assertion. Herein then thus they proceed: It will be confessed that Jesus Christ ordained his church wisely, according to his infinite wisdom, which he exercised about his body. Now to this wisdom of his, for the prevention of innumerable evils, it is agreeable, that he should appoint some one person with that power of declaring truth, and of jurisdiction to enforce the receiving of it, which we plead for. For this was in Peter, as is proved from the texts of Scripture before mentioned, therefore it is continued in them that succeed him. And here lies the great stress of their cause; that to prevent evils and inconveniences, it became the wisdom of Jesus Christ to appoint a person, with all that authority, power, and infallibility, to continue in his church to the end of the world. And this plea they manage variously with much sophistry, rhetoric, and testimonies of antiquity. But suppose all this should be granted; yet I am full well assured, that they can never bring it home to their concernment by any argument, but only the actual claim of the pope wherein he stands singly now in the world; which that it is satisfactory to make it good 'de fide,' that he is so, will not easily be granted. The truth is, of all the attempts they make against the Lord Jesus Christ, this is one of the greatest, wherein they will assert, that it became his wisdom to do that which by no means they can prove that he hath done; which is plainly to tell us what in their judgment he ought to have done, though he hath not; and that therefore it is incumbent on them to supply what he hath been defective in. Had he taken the care he should of them and their master, that he and they might have ruled and revelled over, and in the house of God, he would have appointed things as now they are, which they *affirm to have* become his wisdom. He was a king that

once cried, 'Si Deo in creatione adfuissem, mundum melius ordinassem.' But every friar or monk can say of Jesus Christ, had they been present at his framing the world to come (whereof we speak), they would have told him what had become his wisdom to do. Our blessed Lord hath left sufficient provision against all future emergencies and inconveniences, in his word and Spirit given and promised to his saints. And the one remedy which these men have found out, with the contempt and blasphemy of him and them, hath proved worse than all the other evils and diseases, for whose prevention he made provision; which he hath done also for that remedy of theirs, but that some are hardened through the righteous judgment of God and deceitfulness of sin.

The management of this plea by some of late is very considerable; say they, 'Quia non de verbis solum Scripturæ, sed etiam de sensu plurima controversia est, si ecclesiæ interpretatio non est certa intelligendi norma, ecquis erit istiusmodi controversiæ judex? sensum enim suum pro sua virili quisque defendet; quod si in exploranda verbi Dei intelligentia nullus est certus judex, audemus dicere nullam rempublicam fuisse stultius constitutam. Sin autem apostoli tradiderunt ecclesiis verbum Dei sine intelligentia verbi Dei, quomodo prædicarunt evangelium omni creaturæ? quomodo docuerunt omnes gentes servare quæcunque illis fuerunt a Christo commendata. Non est puerorum aut psittacorum prædicatio, qui sine mente dant, accipiuntque sonum.' Walemburg, Con. 4. Num. 26.

It is well, that at length these men speak out plainly. If the pope be not a visible supreme judge in and over the church, Christ hath in the constitution of his church dealt more foolishly than ever any did in the constitution of a commonwealth. If he have not an infallible power of determining the sense of the Scriptures, the Scripture is but an empty, insignificant word, like the speech of parrots or popinjays. Though Christ hath by his apostles given the Scripture to make the man of God wise unto salvation, and promised his Spirit unto them that believe, by whose assistance the Scripture gives out its own sense to them, yet all is folly if the pope be not supreme and infallible. The

Lord rebuke them, who thus boldly blaspheme his word and wisdom. But let us proceed.

This Peter, thus invested in power that was to be traduced to others, went to Rome, and preached the gospel there. It is most certain, nor will themselves deny it, that if this be not so, and believed, their whole fabric will fall to the ground. But can this be necessary for all sorts of Christians, and every individual of men among them, to believe, when there is not the least insinuation of any such thing in the Scripture; certainly, though it be only a matter of fact, yet being of such huge importance and consequence, and such a doctrine of absolute and indispensable necessity to be believed, as is pretended, depending upon it, if it were true, and true in reference to such an end and purpose as is pleaded, it would not have been passed over in silence there, where so many things of inconceivable less concernment to the church of God (though all in their respective degrees tending to edification) are recorded. As to what is recorded in story; the order and series of things, with the discovery afforded us of Peter's course and place of abode in Scripture, do prevail with me to think steadfastly, that he was never there; against the self-contradicting testimonies of some few, who took up vulgar reports then, when the mystery of iniquity had so far operated at least, that it was judged meet that the chief of the apostles should have lived in the chief city of the world.

But that we may proceed, grant this also, that Peter was at Rome, which they shall never be able to prove; and that he did preach the gospel there; yet so he did, by their own confession, at other places, making his residence at Antioch for some years; what will this avail towards the settling of the matter under consideration? There Christ appointed him to fix his chair, and make that church the place of his residence; λῆροι!

Of his meeting Simon Magus at Rome, who in all probability was never there (for Semo Sangus was not Simon Magus, nor Sanctus, nor Deus Magnus), of the conquest made of him and his devils, of his being instructed of Christ not to go from Rome, but tarry there and suffer, something may be said from old legends. But of his chair,

and fixing of it at Rome, of his confinement, as it were, to that place, in direct opposition to the tenor of his apostolical commission, who first told the story I know not; but this I know, they will one day be ashamed of their chair, thrones, and sees, and jurisdictions, wherein they now so please themselves.

But what is next to this? The bishop of Rome succeeds Peter in all that power, jurisdiction, infallibility, with whatsoever else was fancied before in him, as the ordinary lord of the church, and therefore the Roman church is the catholic; 'quod erat demonstrandum.' Now though this inference will no way follow upon these principles, though they should all be supposed to be true, whereof not one is so much as probable; and though this last assertion be vain and ridiculous, nothing at all being pleaded to ground this succession; no institution of Christ; no act of any council of the church; no will nor testament of Peter; but only it is so fallen out, as the world was composed of a casual concurrence of atoms; yet seeing they will have it so, I desire a little farther information in one thing that yet remains; and that is this, the charter, patents, and grant of all this power, and right of succession unto Peter, in all the advantages, privileges, and jurisdiction, before mentioned, being wholly in their own keeping, whereof I never saw letter or title, nor ever conversed with any one, no not of themselves, that did; I would be gladly informed, whether this grant be made to him absolutely, without any manner of condition whatever; so that whoever comes to be pope of Rome, and possessed of Peter's chair there, by what means soever he is possessed of it, whether he believe the gospel or no, or any of the saving truths therein contained, and so their church must be the catholic church, though it follow him in all abominations; or whether it be made on any condition to him, especially that of cleaving to the doctrine of Christ revealed in the gospel? If they say the first, that it is an absolute grant, that is made to him without any condition expressed or necessarily to be understood, I am at an issue, and have nothing to add, but my desire that the grant may be produced; for whilst we are at this variance, it is against all law and equity, that the parties litigant should be *admitted to plead bare* allegations, without proof. If

the latter, though we should grant all the former monstrous suppositions, yet we are perfectly secure against all their pretensions, knowing nothing more clearly and evidently, than that he and they have broken all conditions that can possibly be imagined, by corrupting and perverting almost the whole doctrine of the gospel.

And whereas it may be supposed, that the great condition of such a grant would consist in his diligent attendance to the Scriptures, the word of God, herein doth the filth of their abominations appear above all other things. The guilt that is in that society or combination of men, in locking up the Scriptures in an unknown tongue, forbidding the people to read it, burning some men to death for the studying of it, and no more, disputing against its power to make good its own authority, charging it with obscurity, imperfection, insufficiency, frighting men from the perusal of it, with the danger of being seduced and made heretics by so doing, setting up their own traditions in an equality with it, if not exalting them above it, studying by all means to decry it as useless and contemptible, at least comparatively with themselves, will not be purged from them for ever.

But you will say, this is a simple question. For the pope of Rome hath a promise that he shall still be such a one as is fit to be trusted with the power mentioned; and not one that shall defend Mahomet to be the prophet of God sent into the world, or the like abominations; at least, that be he what he will, placed in the chair, he shall not err, nor mistake in what he delivereth for truth. Now seeing themselves, as was said, are the sole keepers of this promise and grant also, which they have not as yet shewed to the world; I am necessitated to ask once more, whether it be made to him merely upon condition of mounting into his chair, or also upon this condition, that he use the means appointed by God to come to the knowledge of the truth? If they say the former, I must needs say, that it is so remote from my apprehension, that God, who will be worshipped in spirit and and in truth only, should now under the gospel promise to any persons, that be they never so wicked and abominable, never so openly and evidently sworn enemies of him and his anointed, whether they use any means or not by him appointed, that they shall always in all things speak the truth,

which they hate, in love, which they have not, with that authority which all his saints must bow unto; especially not having intimated any one word of any such promise in the Scripture, that I know not whatever I heard of in my life that I cannot as soon believe. If they say the latter, we close then as we did our former inquiry.

Upon the credit and strength of these sandy foundations and principles, which neither severally nor jointly will bear the weight of a feather, in a long-continued course of apostacy, have men conquered all policy, religion, and honesty, and built up that stupendous fabric, coupled together with subtle and scarce discernible joints and ligaments, which they call the catholic church.

1. In despite of policy they have not only enslaved kings, kingdoms, commonwealths, nations, and people to be their vassals, and at their disposal; but also contrary to all rules of government, beyond the thoughts and conjectures of all or any that ever wrote of, or instituted, a government in the world, they have in most nations of Europe set up a government, authority, and jurisdiction, within another government and authority settled on other accounts, the one independent on the other, and have brought these things to some kind of consistency; which that it might be accomplished never entered into the heart of any wise man once to imagine, nor had ever been by them effected, without such advantages, as none in the world ever had in such a continuance but themselves: unless the Druids of old in some nations obtained some such thing.*

2. In despite of religion itself, they have made a new creed, invented new ways of worship, given a whole sum and system of their own, altogether alien from the word of God, without an open disclaiming of that word, which in innumerable places bears testimony to its own perfection and fulness.

3. Contrary to common honesty, the first principles of

* Si quis aut privatus, aut populus eorum decreto non stetit, sacrificiis interdicunt. Hæc pœna apud eos est gravissima; quibus ita est interdictum, ii numero impiorum, et sceleratorum habentur, ab iis omnes decedunt, aditum eorum sermonemque defugiunt, ne quid ex contagione incommodi accipiant; neque iis petentibus jus redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur: his autem omnibus Druidibus præest unus; qui summam inter eos habet authoritatem: hoc mortuo, si quis ex reliquis *excellit dignitate, succedit: at si* sunt plures, suffragio Druidum allegitur: *nonnunquam etiam de principatu armis* contendunt. Cæs. lib. 6. de Bell. Gal.

reason, with violence to the evident dictates of the law of nature, they will in confidence of these principles have the word and sentence of a pope, though a beast, a witch, a conjuror, as by their own confession many of them have been, to be implicitly submitted to in and about things which he neither knoweth, nor loveth, nor careth for; being yet such in themselves as immediately and directly concern the everlasting condition of the souls of men. And this is our second return to their pretence of being the catholic church: to which I add,

3. That their plea is so far from truth, that they are, and they only, the catholic church, that indeed they belong not to it, because they keep not the 'unity of the faith,' which is required to constitute any person whatever a member of that church, but fail in all the conditions of it. For,

1. To proceed by way of instance, they do not profess nor believe a justification distinct from sanctification, and acceptance thereof; the doctrine whereof is of absolute and indispensable necessity to the preservation of the unity of the faith; and so fail in the first condition of professing all necessary truths. I know what they say of justification, what they have determined concerning it in the council of Trent, what they dispute about it in their books of controversies. But I deny that which they contend for to be a justification; so that they do not deny only justification by faith, but positively, over and above, the infusion of grace, and the acceptance of the obedience thence arising; that there is any justification at all consisting in the free and full absolution of a sinner, on the account of Christ.

2. They discover principles corrupt and depraved, utterly inconsistent with those truths, and the receiving of them, which in general by owning the Scriptures they do profess. Herein to pass by the principles of atheism, wickedness, and profaneness, that effectually work and manifest themselves in the generality of their priests and people; that of self-righteousness, that is in the best of their devotionists, is utterly inconsistent with the whole doctrine of the gospel, and all saving truths concerning the mediation of Jesus Christ therein contained.

3. That in their doctrine of the pope's supremacy, of *merits, satisfaction*, the mass, the worshipping of images,

they add such things to their profession as enervate the efficacy of all the saving truths they do profess, and so fail in the third condition. This hath so abundantly been manifested by others, that I shall not need to add any thing to give the charge of it upon them any farther evidence or demonstration.

Thus it is unhappily fallen out with these men, that what of all men they most pretend unto, that of all men they have the least interest in. Athenæus tells us of one Thrasilaus an Athenian, who being phrenetically distempered, whatever ships came into the Pyræum he looked on them and thought them his own, and rejoiced as the master of so great wealth, when he was not the owner of so much as a boat: such a distemper of pride and folly hath in the like manner seized on these persons with whom we have to do; that wherever in Scripture they meet with the name church, presently, as though they were intended by it, they rejoice in the privileges of it, when their concernment lies not at all therein.

To close this whole discourse I shall bring the grand argument of the Romanists (with whom I shall now in this treatise have little more to do), wherewith they make such a noise in the world, to an issue. Of the many forms and shapes whereinto by them it is cast, this seems to be the most perspicuously expressive of their intention.

Voluntarily to forsake the communion of the church of Christ is schism, and they that do so are guilty of it;

You have voluntarily forsaken the communion of the church of Christ:

Therefore, you are guilty of the sin of schism.

I have purposely omitted the interposing of the term catholic, that the reason of the argument might run to its length; for upon the taking in of that term we have nothing to do, but only to deny the minor proposition; seeing the Roman church, be it what it will, is not the church catholic; but as it is without that limitation called the church of Christ indefinitely, it leaves place for a farther and fuller answer.

To this by way of inference they add, that schism, as it declared by St. Austin and St. Thomas of Aquin, being so great and damnable a *sin;* and whereas it is plain, that *out of the church, which,* as Peter says, is as Noah's ark,

1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. there is no salvation, it is clear you will be damned. This is the sum of their plea.

Now as for the fore-mentioned argument, some of our divines answer to the minor proposition, and that both as to the terms of voluntary forsaking, and that also of the communion of the church. For the first, they say they did not voluntarily forsake the communion of the church that then was, but being necessitated by the command of God to reform themselves in sundry things, they were driven out by bell, book, and candle, cursed out, killed out, driven out by all manner of violence, ecclesiastical and civil; which is a strange way of men's becoming schismatic.

2. That they forsook not the communion of the church, but the corruptions of it, or the communion of it in its corruption, not in other things, wherein it was lawful to continue communion with it.

To give strength to this answer, they farther add, that though they grant the church of Rome to have been at the time of the first separation a true church of Christ, yet they deny it to be the catholic church, or only visible church then in the world; the churches in the East claiming that title by as good a right as she. So they. Others principally answer to the major proposition, and tell you, that separation is either causeless, or upon just ground and cause; that it is a causeless separation only from the church of Christ that is schism; that there can be no cause of schism, for if there be a cause of schism materially, it ceaseth to be schism formally: and so to strengthen their answer 'in hypothesi,' they fall upon the idolatries, heresies, tyranny, and apostacy of the church of Rome, as just causes of separation from her; nor will their plea be shaken to eternity: so that being true and popular, understood by the meanest, though it contain not the whole truth, I shall not in the least impair it.

For them, who have found out new ways of justifying our separation from Rome, on principles of limiting the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome to a peculiar patriarchate, and granting a power to kings or nations, to erect patriarchs or metropolitans within their own territories, and the like; the Protestant cause is not concerned in their *plea; the* whole of it on both hands being foreign to the

Scripture, relating mostly to human constitutions, wherein they may have liberty to exercise their wits and abilities.

Not receding from what hath by others solidly been pleaded, on the answers above mentioned; in answer to the principles I have hitherto evinced, I shall proceed to give my account of the argument proposed.

That we mistake not, I only premise, that I take schism in this argument in the notion and sense of the Scripture precisely, wherein alone it will reach the conscience, and bear the weight of inferring damnation from it.

1. Then I wholly deny the major proposition, as utterly false, in what sense soever that expression, 'true church of Christ' is taken. Take it for the catholic church of Christ, I deny that any one, who is once a true member of it, can utterly forsake its communion; no living member of that body of Christ can perish; and on supposition it could do so, it would be madness to call that crime schism: nor is this a mere denial of the assertion, but such as is attended with an invincible truth for its maintenance.

Take it for the general visible church of Christ; th,, voluntary forsaking of its communion, which consists in the profession of the same faith, is not schism, but apostacy, and the thing itself is to be removed from the question in hand: and as for apostates from the faith of the gospel, we question not their damnation; it sleepeth not: whoever called a Christian that turned Jew or Mahometan a schismatic?

Take it for a particular church of Christ, I deny,

(1.) That separation from a particular church, as such, as merely separation, is schism, or ought to be so esteemed; though perhaps such separation may proceed from schism, and be also attended with other evils.

(2.) That however, separation upon just cause and ground from any church, is no schism: this is granted by all persons living. Schism is causeless, say all men however concerned. And herein is a truth uncontrollable, separation upon just cause is a duty; and therefore cannot be schism, which is always a sin. Now there are five hundred things in the church of Rome, whereof every one, grafted as they are there into the stock and principle of imposition on the practice *and confession* of men, is a sufficient cause

of separation from any particular church in the world; yet, from all of them, one after another, should they all consent unto the same thing, and impose it in the same manner, if there be any truth in that maxim; 'It is better to obey God than man.'

2. I wholly deny the minor proposition also, if spoken in reference to the church of Rome; though I willingly acknowledge our separation to be voluntary from them; no more being done than I would do over again this day, God assisting me, were I called unto it. But separation in the sense contended about, must be from some state and condition of Christ's institution, from communion with a church which we held by his appointment; otherwise it will not be pleaded that it is a schism, at least not in a gospel sense. Now though our forefathers, in the faith we profess, lived in subjection to the pope of Rome, or his subordinate engines, yet they were not so subject to them, in any way or state instituted by Christ; so that the relinquishment of that state can possibly be no such separation, as to be termed schism. For I wholly deny that the papacy, exercising its power in its supreme and subordinate officers, which with them is their church, is a church at all of Christ's appointment, or any such thing. And when they prove it is so, I will be of it. So that when our forefathers withdrew their neck from his tyrannical yoke, and forsook the practice of his abominations in the worship of God, they forsook no church of Christ's institution, they relinquished no communion of Christ's appointment. A man may possibly forsake Babylon, and yet not forsake Zion.

For the aggravations of the sin of schism from some ancient writers, Austin and Optatus, men interested in the contests about it, Leo and Innocent, gaining by the notion of it then growing in the world, Thomas Aquinas and such vassals of the papacy, we are not concerned in them; what the Lord speaks of it, that we judge concerning it. It is true of the catholic church always, that out of it is no salvation, it being the society of them that shall be saved; and of the visible church in general, in some sense and cases; seeing with the heart: 'man believeth to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;' but of a particular church in no sense, unless that of contempt of a

duty; and to imagine Peter to speak of any such
s a fancy.

consequence of this divesting the Roman synagogue
privileges of a true church in any sense, arising in
ughts of some to a denial of that ministry, which we
t this day in England, must by the way a little be
ued. For my part (be it spoken without offence), if
n hath nothing to plead for his ministry, but merely
ccessive ordination which he hath received through
rch of Rome, I cannot see a stable bottom of owning
to be; I do not say, if he will plead nothing else,
he hath nothing else to plead. He may have that
indeed constitutes him a minister, though he will not
as we it doth. Nor doth it come here into inquiry,
r there were not a true ministry in some all along
he papacy, distinct from it, as were the thousands in
in the days of Elijah; when in the ten tribes, as to
blic worship, there was no true ministry at all. Nor
id that any have their ministry from Rome, as though
ce, which is an ordinance of Christ, was instituted
christ: but the question is, whether this be a suffi-
nd good basis and foundation of any man's interest
ffice of the ministry, that he hath received ordina-
a succession, through the administration of, not the
flying into the wilderness under the persecution of
ist, not of the two witnesses prophesying all along
the Roman apostacy, not from them to whom we
e in doctrine, as the Waldenses, but the beast itself,
secuting church of Rome, the pope and his adherents,
are certainly administrators of the ordination pleaded
r that in doctrine we should succeed the persecuted
, and in office the persecuting beast. I shall not
his at large, professedly disclaiming all thoughts of
ng those ministers, as papal and antichristian, who
ere to this ordination; being many of them eminently
of God to dispense the word, and submitted unto by
ople in the administration of the ordinances, and are
rorthy ministers of the gospel of Christ. But,
hall only remark something on the plea that is in
on by them, who would (if I mistake not) keep up in

this particular, what God would have pulled down. They ask us, why not ordination from the church of Rome as well as the Scripture? In which inquiry I am sorry that some do still continue. We are so far from having the Scriptures from the church of Rome, by any authority of it as such, that it is one cause of daily praising God, that by his providence he kept them from being either corrupted or destroyed by them. It is true, the Bible was kept among the people that lived in those parts of the world where the pope prevailed: so was the Old Testament by the Jews; the whole by the eastern Christians: by none so corrupted as by those of the papal territory. God forbid we should say we had the Scriptures from the church of Rome, as such; if we had, why do we not keep them as she delivered them to us, in the vulgar translation, with the apocryphal additions? The ordination pleaded for, is from the authority of the church of Rome, as such: the Scriptures were by the providence of God preserved under the papacy for the use of his people; and had they been found by chance, as it were, like the law of old, they had been the same to us that now they are. So that of these things there is not the same reason.

It is also pleaded, that the granting true ordination to the church of Rome doth not prove that to be a true church. This I profess I understand not; they who ordained had no power so to do, but as they were officers of that church; as such they did it; and if others had ordained, who were not officers of that church, all would confess that action to be null. But they who will not be contented that Christ hath appointed the office of the ministry to be continued in his churches, that he continues to dispense the gifts of his Spirit for the execution of that office when men are called thereunto, that he prepares the hearts of his people to desire and submit unto them in the Lord, that as to the manner of entrance upon the work, they may have it according to the mind of Christ to the utmost in all circumstances; so soon as his churches are shaken out of the dust of Babylon with his glory shining on them, and the tabernacle of God is thereby once more placed with men, shall have leave for me to derive their interest in the ministry through that dark

passage, wherein I cannot see one step before me: if they are otherwise qualified and accepted as above, I shall ever pay them that honour which is due to elders labouring in the word and doctrine.

CHAP. VII.

Of a particular church; its nature. Frequently mentioned in Scripture. Particular congregations acknowledged the only churches of the first institution. What ensued on the multiplication of churches. Some things premised to clear the unity of the church in this sense. Every believer ordinarily obliged to join himself to some particular church. Many things in instituted worship answering a natural principle. Perpetuity of the church in this sense. True churches at first planted in England. How they ceased so to be. How churches may be again re-erected. Of the union of a particular church in itself. Foundation of that union twofold. The union itself. Of the communion of particular churches one with another. Our concernment in this union.

I NOW descend to the last consideration of a church, in the most usual acceptation of that name in the New Testament, that is, of a particular instituted church. A church in this sense I take to be a society of men, called by the word to the obedience of the faith in Christ, and joint performance of the worship of God in the same individual ordinances, according to the order by Christ prescribed. This general description of it exhibits its nature so far as is necessary to clear the subject of our present disquisition. A more accurate definition would only administer farther occasion of contesting about things, not necessary to be determined as to the inquiry in hand. Such as this was the church at Jerusalem that was persecuted, Acts viii. 1. the church whereof Saul made havoc, ver. 3. the church that was vexed by Herod, Acts xii. 1. Such was the church at Antioch, which 'assembled together in one place,' Acts xiii. 14. wherein were sundry prophets, Acts xiii. 1. as that at Jerusalem consisted of elders and brethren, Acts xv. 22. the apostles or some of them being there then present, which added no other consideration to that church than that we are now speaking of. Such were those many churches wherein elders were ordained by Paul's appointment, Acts xiv. 23.

as also the church of Cæsarea, Acts xviii. 22. and at Ephesus, Acts xx. 14. 28. as was that of Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 2. vi. 4. 11, 12. xiv. 4, 5. 12. 19. 2 Cor. i. 1. and those mentioned, Rev. i. 2, 3. all which Paul calls the churches of the Gentiles, Rom. xvi. 4. in contradistinction to those of the Jews; and calls them indefinitely the churches of God, ver. 16. or the churches of Christ, 1 Cor. vii. 17. 2 Cor. viii. 18, 19. 23. 2 Thess. i. 4. and in sundry other places. Hence we have mention of many churches in one country, as in Judea, Acts ix. 1. in Asia, 1 Cor. xvi. 19. in Macedonia, 2 Cor viii. 1. in Galatia, Gal. i. 2. the seven churches of Asia, Rev. i. 11. and unto τὰς πόλεις, Acts xvi. 4. *al* ἐκκλησίαι answers, ver. 5. in the same country.

I suppose that in this description of a particular church I have not only the consent of them of all sorts with whom I have now to do, as to what remains of this discourse, but also their acknowledgment that these were the only kinds of churches of the first institution. The reverend authors of the Jus Divinum Ministerii Anglicani, p. 2. c. 6. tell us, that 'in the beginning of Christianity the number of believers even in the greatest cities were so few, as that they might all meet ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, in one and the same place. And these are called the church of the city, and the angel of such a city was congregational, not diocesan;' which discourse exhibits that state of a particular church which is now pleaded for, and which shall afterward be evinced, allowing no other, no not in the greatest cities. In a rejoinder to that treatise, so far as the case of episcopacy is herein concerned, by a person well known by his labours in that cause, this is acknowledged to be so. 'Believers,' saith he, 'in great cities were not at first divided into parishes, whilst the number of Christians was so small that they might well assemble in the same place,' Ham. Vind. p. 16. Of the believers of one city meeting in one place, being one church, we have the like grant, p. 18. 'In this particular church,' he says, 'there was one bishop, which had the rule of it, and of the believers in the villages adjacent to that city; which as it sometimes was not so, Rom. xvi. 1, 2. so for the most part it seems to have been the case; and distinct churches upon the growth of the number of believers were to be erected in several places of the vicinage.

And this is the state of a particular instituted church which we plead for. Whether in process of time, believers multiplying, those who had been of one church met in several assemblies, by a settled distribution of them, to celebrate the same ordinances specifically, and so made many churches; or met in several places in parties, still continuing one body, and were governed in common by the elders, whom they increased and multiplied in proportion to the increase of believers; or whether, that one or more officers, elders, or bishops, of that first single congregation, taking on him or them the care of those inhabiting the city wherein the church was first planted, designed and sent some fitted for that purpose, upon their desire and choice, or otherwise, to the several lesser companies of the region adjacent, which in process of time became dependent on, and subject to, the officer and officers of that first church from whence they came forth, I dispute not. I am satisfied that the first plantation of churches was as hath been pleaded: and I know what was done afterward on the one hand or the other must be examined, as to our concernment, by what ought to have been done. But of those things afterward.

Now according to the course of procedure hitherto insisted on, a declaration of the unity of the church in this sense, what it is, wherein it doth consist, with what it is to be guilty of the breach of that unity, must ensue; and this shall be done after I have premised some few things previously necessary thereunto.

I say then,

1. A man may be a member of the catholic church of Christ, be united to him by the inhabitation of his Spirit, and participation of life from him, who upon the account of some providential hindrance, is never joined to any particular congregation, for the participation of ordinances, all his days.

2. In like manner may he be a member of the church considered as professing visibly; seeing that he may do all that is of him required thereunto, without any such conjunction to a visible particular church, But yet,

3. I willingly grant, that every believer is obliged, as in a part of his duty, to join himself to some one of those churches of Christ; that *therein* he may abide in doctrine,

and fellowship, and 'breaking of bread and prayer,' a cording to the order of the gospel, if he have advantage a opportunity so to do. For,

1. There are some duties incumbent on us, which c not possibly be performed, but on a supposition of this d previously required, and submitted unto, Matt. xviii. 15—

2. There are some ordinances of Christ, appointed the good and benefit of those that believe, which t can never be made partakers of if not related to some s society; as public admonition, excommunication, partici tion of the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

3. The care that Jesus Christ hath taken that all things well ordered in these churches, giving no direction for performance of any duty of worship merely and purely sovereign institution, but only in them, and by them, w are so joined, sufficiently evinced his mind, and our d herein, Rev. ii. 7. 11. 29. iii. 6, 7. 12. 1 Cor. xi.

4. The gathering, planting, and settling of such churc by the apostles, with the care they took in bringing them perfection, leaving none whom they converted out of t order, where it was possible for them to be reduced unto is of the same importance, Acts xiv. 23. Tit. i. 5.

5. Christ's institution of officers for them, Eph. iv. 1 Cor. xi. 28. calling such a church his body, ver. 29. actly assigning to every one his duty in such societies respect of the place he held in them, with his care for t preservation from confusion, and for order, evinces f whom they are, and what is our duty in reference unto th

6. The judging and condemning them by the Holy Gh as disorderly blameable persons who are to be avoided, w walk not according to the rules and order appointed in th churches, his care that those churches be not scandali or offended, with innumerable other considerations, evi their institution to be from heaven, not of men, or any dential considerations of them whatever.

That there is an instituted worship of God to be contin under the New Testament until the second coming of Ch I suppose needs not much proof. With those with wh it doth so I am not now treating, and must not make it business to give it evidence, by the innumerable testimo which might be alleged to that purpose. That for the wh

of his worship, matter, or manner, or any part of it, God hath changed his way of proceeding, and will not allow the will and prudence of man to be the measure and rule of his honour and glory therein, contrary to what he did or would allow under the law, is so prejudicial to the perfection of the gospel, infinite wisdom, and all-sufficiency of Christ, and so destructive to the whole obligation of the second commandment, having no ground in the Scripture, but being built merely on the conceit of men, suited to one carnal interest or other, I shall unwillingly debate it. That as to this particular under consideration, there were particular churches instituted by the authority of Jesus Christ, owned and approved by him; that officers for them were of his appointment, and furnished with gifts from him for the execution of their employment; that rules, cautions, and instructions for the due settlement of those churches were given by him; that these churches were made the only seat of that worship, which in particular he expressed his will to have continued until he came, is of so much light in Scripture, that he must wink hard that will not see it.

That either he did not originally appoint these things, or he did not give out the gifts of his Spirit, in reference to the right ordering of them, and exalting of his glory in them; or that having done so then, yet that his institutions have an end, being only for a season, and that it may be known when the efficacy of any of his institutions ceaseth; or that he doth not now dispense the gifts and graces of his Spirit, to render them useful, is a difficult task for any man to undertake to evince.

There is indeed, in the institutions of Christ, much that answers a natural principle in men, who are on many accounts formed and fitted for society. A confederation and consultation to carry on any design, wherein the concernment of the individuals doth lie, within such bounds, and in such order, as lies in a ready way to the end aimed at, is exceeding suitable to the principles whereby we are acted and guided as men. But he that would hence conclude, that there is no more but this, and the acting of these principles, in this church constitution whereof we speak, and that therefore men may be cast into any prudential form, or appoint other *ways and forms of* it than those mentioned in

the Scripture, as appointed and owned, takes on himself the demonstrating that all things necessarily required to the constitution of such a church-society are commanded by the law of nature, and therefore allowed of and approved only by Christ, and so to be wholly moral, and to have nothing of instituted worship in them; and also he must know, that when, on that supposition, he hath given a probable reason why never any persons in the world fixed on such societies in all essential things as those, seeing they are natural, that he leaves less to the prudence of men, and to the ordering and disposing of things concerning them, than those who make them of pure institution, all whose circumstances cannot be derived from themselves; as those of things purely moral may. But this is not of my present consideration.

2. Nor shall I consider, whether perpetuity be a property of the church of Christ in this sense; that is, not whether a church that was once so may cease to be so, which it is known I plead for in the instance of the church of Rome, not to mention others; but whether by virtue of any promise of Christ, there shall always be somewhere in the world a visible church, visibly celebrating his ordinances. Luke i. 33. 'He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;' is pleaded to this purpose. But that any more but the spiritual reign of Christ in his catholic church is there intended, is not proved. Matt. xvi. 18. 'Upon this rock will I build my church,' is also urged; but to intend any but true believers, and that as such, in that promise, is wholly to enervate it, and to take away its force and efficacy: chap. xviii. 18. 20. declares the presence of Christ with his church wherever it be, not that a church in the regard treated of shall be. To the same purpose are other expressions in the Scripture. As I will not deny this in general, so I am unsatisfied as to any particular instance for the making of it good.

It is said, that true churches were are at first planted in England. How then, or by what means, did they cease so to be? how, or by what act, did God unchurch them? They did it themselves meritoriously by apostacy and idolatry, God legally by his institution of a law of rejection of such churches. If any shall ask, How then is it possible, that

any such churches should be raised anew? I say, that the catholic church mystical, and that visibly professing, being preserved entire, he that thinketh there needs a miracle for those who are members of them to join in such a society as those now spoken of, according to the institution of Christ, is a person delighting in needless scruples.

Christ hath promised, that where 'two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them;' Matt. xviii. 20. It is now supposed, with some hope to have it granted, that the Scripture being the power of God to salvation, Rom. i. 16. hath a sufficient efficacy and energy in itself, as to its own kind, for the conversion of souls; yea, let us, till opposition be made to it, take it for granted, that by that force and efficacy it doth mainly and principally evince its own divinity, or divine original. Those who are contented for the honour of that word which God delighteth to magnify to grant this supposition, will not, I hope, think it impossible, that though all church-state should cease in any place, and yet the Scripture by the providence of God be there in the hand of individuals preserved, two or three should be called, converted, and regenerated by it. For my part, I think he that questions it, must do it on some corrupt principle of a secondary dependent authority in the word of God as to us; with which sort of men I do not now deal. I ask whether these converted persons may not possibly come together, or assemble themselves in the name of Jesus? may they not upon his command, and in expectation of the accomplishment of his promise, so come together, with resolution to do his will, and to exhort one another thereto; Zech. iii. 10. Mal. iii. 10. Truly I believe they may, in what part of the world soever their lot is fallen. Here lie all the difficulties, whether being come together in the name of Christ they may do what he hath commanded them, or no? whether they may exhort and stir up one another to do the will of Christ? Most certain it is, that Christ will give them his presence, and therewithal his authority, for the performance of any duty that he requireth at their hands. Were not men angry, troubled, and disappointed, there would be little difficulty in this business. But of this elsewhere.

3. Upon this supposition, that particular churches are institutions of *Jesus Christ*, which is granted by all with

whom I have to do, I proceed to make inquiry into their union and communion, that so we may know wherein the bonds of them do consist.

1. There is a double foundation, fountain, or cause of the union of such a church: the one external, procuring, commanding; the other internal, inciting, directing, assisting. The first is the institution of Jesus Christ, before mentioned, requiring peace and order, union, consent, and agreement, in and among all the members of such a church; all to be regulated, ordered, and bounded, by the rules, laws, prescripts, which from him they have received, for their walking in those societies.

The latter is that love without dissimulation, which always is, or which always ought to be, between all the members of such a church; exerting itself in their respective duties one towards another, in that holy combination, whereunto they are called and entered for the worship of God: whether they are those which lie in the level of the equality of their common interest of being church-members, or those which are required of them in the several differences, whereby on any account whatever they are distinguished one from another amongst themselves; for 'love is the bond of perfectness;' Col. iii. 14.

Hence then it appears, what is the union of such a church, and what is the communion to be observed therein, by the appointment of Jesus Christ. The joint consent of all the members of it, in obedience to the command of Christ, from a principle of love, to walk together in the universal celebration of all the ordinances of the worship of God, instituted and appointed to be celebrated in such a church; and to perform all the duties and offices of love, which in reference to one another, in their respective stations and places, are by God required of them; and doing so accordingly, is the union inquired after. See Phil. ii. 1—3. iv. 1—3. 1 Cor. i. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Rom. xv. 5.

Whereas there are in these churches, some rulers, some ruled; some eyes, some hands in this body; some parts visibly comely, some uncomely; upon the account of that variety of gifts and graces which is distributed to them: in the performance of duties, regard is to be had to all the particular rules that are given with respect to men in their seve-

ral places and distributions. Herein doth the union of a particular church consist; herein have the members of it communion among themselves, and with the whole.

4. I shall farther grant, and add hereunto; over and above the union that is between the members of several particular churches, by virtue of their interest in the church catholic, which draws after it a necessity of the occasional exercise of duties of love one towards another, and that communion they have, as members of the general church visible, in the profession of the faith once delivered unto the saints; there is a communion also to be observed between these churches, as such, which is sometimes, or may be exerted in their assemblies by their delegates, for declaring their sense, and determining things of joint concernment unto them. Whether there ought to be an ordinary combination of the officers of these churches, invested with power for the disposal of things and persons that concern one or more of them, in several subordinations, by the institution of Christ; as it is not my judgment that so there is, so it belongs not unto my present undertaking at all to debate.

That which alone remains to be done, is to consider what is our concernment as to the breach of this union, which we profess to be appointed by Jesus Christ; and that both as we are Protestants, as also farther differenced, according to the intimations given at the entrance of this discourse. What hath already been delivered about the nature of schism, and the Scripture notion of it, might well suffice, as to our vindication in this business from any charge that we are or seem obnoxious unto. But because I have no reason to suppose, that some men will be so favourable unto us, as to take pains for the improvement of principles, though in themselves clearly evinced on our behalf; the application of them to some present cases, with the removal of objections that lie against my intendment, must be farther added.

Some things there are, which upon what hath been spoken, I shall assume and suppose as granted in thesi, until I see them otherwise disproved than as yet I have done. Of these the first is, That the departing or secession of any man or men, from any particular church, as to that communion *which is peculiar* to such a church, which he

or they have had therewith, is no where called schism, no is so in the nature of the thing itself (as the general signification of the word is restrained by its Scripture use); but is a thing to be judged, and receive a title according to the causes and circumstances of it.

2. One church's refusing to hold that communion with another which ought to be between them, is not schism properly so called.

3. The departure of any man or men from the society or communion of any church whatever, so it be done without strife, variance, judging, and condemning of others, because according to the light of their consciences they cannot in all things in them worship God according to his mind, cannot be rendered evil but from circumstances taken from the persons so doing, or the way and manner whereby and wherein they do it.

Unto these I add, that if any one can shew and evince that we have departed from, and left the communion of, any particular church of Christ, with which we ought to walk according to the order above mentioned, or have disturbed and broken the order and union of Christ's institution, wherein we are or were inwrapped, we put ourselves on the mercy of our judges.

The consideration of what is the charge on any of us, on this account, was the first thing aimed at in this discourse; and as it was necessary from the rules of the method wherein I have proceeded, comes now in the last place to be put to the issue and trial, which it shall in the next chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the church of England. The charge of schism in the name thereof proposed and considered. Several considerations of the church of England. In what sense we were members of it. Of anabaptism. The subjection due to bishops. Their power examined. Its original in this nation. Of the ministerial power of bishops. Its present continuance. Of the church of England, what it is. Its description. Form peculiar and constitutive. Answer to the charge of schism, on separation from it, in its episcopal constitution. How and by what means it was taken away. Things necessary to the constitution of such a church proposed, and offered to proof. The second way of constituting a national church, considered. Principles agreed on and consented unto between the parties at variance on this account. Judgment of Amiraldus in this case. Inferences from the common principles before consented unto. The case of schism in reference to a national church in the last sense, debated. Of particular churches, and separation from them. On what accounts justifiable. No necessity of joining to this or that. Separation from some so called, required. Of the church of Corinth. The duty of its members. Austin's judgment of the practice of Elijah. The last objection waved. Inferences upon the whole.

THAT which first presents itself, is a plea against us, in the name of the church of England, and those intrusted with the reglement thereof, as it was settled and established some years since; the sum whereof, if I mistake not, amounts to thus much.

You were sometimes members and children of the church of England, and lived in the communion thereof, professing obedience thereunto, according to its rules and canons; you were in an orderly subjection to the archbishops, bishops, and those acting under them in the hierarchy; who were officers of that church; in that church you were baptized, and joined in the outward worship celebrated therein; but you have now voluntarily, and of your own accord, forsaken and renounced the communion of this church; cast off your subjection to the bishops and rulers; rejected the form of worship appointed in that church, that great bond of its communion; and set up separated churches of your own, according to your pleasures; and so are properly schismatics.

This I say, if I mistake not, is the sum of the charge against us, on the account of our late attempt for reformation, and reducing of the church of Christ to its primi-

tive institution, which we profess our aim in singleness of heart to have been, and leave the judgment of it unto God.

To acquit ourselves of this imputation, I shall declare,

1. How far we own ourselves to have been, or to be, members or children (as they speak) of the church of England, as it is called or esteemed.

2. What was the subjection wherein we or any of us stood, or might be supposed to have stood, to the prelates or bishops of that church. And then I shall,

3. Put the whole to the issue and inquiry, whether we have broken any bond or order, which by the institution and appointment of Jesus Christ we ought to have preserved entire, and unviolated: not doubting but that on the whole matter in difference, we shall find the charge managed against us to be resolved wholly into the prudence and interest of some men, wherein our consciences are not concerned.

As to the first proposal; the several considerations that the church of England may fall under, will make way for the determination of our relation thereunto.

1. There being in this country of England much people of God, many of his elect called and sanctified by and through the Spirit and blood of Christ, with the washing of water and the word, so made true living members of the mystical body, or catholic church of Christ, holding him as a spiritual head, receiving influences of life and grace from him continually, they may be called, though improperly, the church of England; that is, that part of Christ's catholic church militant which lives in England. In this sense it is the desire of our souls to be found and to abide members of the church of England, to keep with it, whilst we live in this world, the 'unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Jerusalem which is above, is the mother of us all; and one is our Father, which is in heaven; one is our Head, Sovereign, Lord, and Ruler, the dearly beloved of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have grieved, offended, troubled the least member of this church, so that he may justly take offence at any of our ways, we profess our readiness to lie at his or their feet for reconciliation, according to the mind of Christ. If we bear not love to all the members of the church of England in this sense, without dissi-

mulation (yea, even to them amongst them, who through mistakes and darkness, have on several accounts designed our harm and ruin); if we rejoice not with them, and suffer not with them, however they may be differenced in and by their opinions, or walkings; if we desire not their good, as the good of our own souls, and are not ready to hold any communion with them, wherein their and our light will give and afford unto us peace mutually; if we judge, condemn, despise any of them, as to their persons, spiritual state, and condition, because they walk not with us, let us be esteemed the vilest schismatics that ever lived on the face of the earth. But as to our membership in the church of England on this account, we stand or fall to our own master.

2. The rulers, governors, teachers, and body of the people of this nation of England, having by laws, professions, and public protestations, cast off the tyranny, authority, and doctrine of the church of Rome, with its head the pope; and jointly assented unto, and publicly professed the doctrine of the gospel, as expressed in their public confession, variously attested and confirmed, declaring their profession by that public confession, preaching, laws, and writings suitable thereunto, may also be called on good account, the church of England. In this sense, we profess ourselves members of the church of England, and professing and adhering to that doctrine of faith in the unity of it, which was here established and declared, as was before spoken. As to the attempt of some, who accuse us for everting of fundamentals, by our doctrine of election by the free grace of God, of effectual redemption of the elect only, conversion by the irresistible efficacy of grace, and the associate doctrines, which are commonly known, we suppose the more sober part of our adversaries will give them little thanks for their pains therein: if for no other reason, yet at least, because they know the cause they have to manage against us is weakened thereby. Indeed it seems strange to us, that we should be charged with schism from the church of England, for endeavouring to reform ourselves, as to something relating to the worship of God, by men everting, and denying so considerable a portion of the doctrine of that church, which we sacredly retain entire, as the most urgent of our present adversaries *do*. *In this sense*, I say, we still confess our-

selves members of the church of England; nor have we made any separation from it, but do daily labour to improve, and carry on the light of the gospel which shines therein, and on the account whereof it is renowned in the world.

3. Though I know not how proper that expression of children of the church may be under the New Testament, nor can by any means consent unto it, to be the urging of any obedience to any church or churches whatsoever on that account; no such use being made of that consideration by the Holy Ghost, nor any parallel unto it insisted on by him; yet in a general sense, so far as our receiving our regeneration and new birth, through the grace of God by the preaching of the word, and the saving truths thereof here professed, with the seal of it in our baptism, may be signified by that expression, we own ourselves to have been, and to be children of the church of England, because we have received all this by the administration of the gospel here in England, as dispensed in several assemblies therein: and are contented, that this concession be improved to the utmost.

Here indeed are we left by them who renounce the baptism they have received in their infancy, and repeat it again amongst themselves. Yet I suppose, that he who upon that single account will undertake to prove them schismatical, may find himself entangled. Nor is the case with them exactly as it was with the Donatists. They do the same thing with them, but not on the same principles. The Donatists rebaptized those who came to their societies, because they professed themselves to believe, that all administration of ordinances not in their assemblies was null: and that they were to be looked on as no such thing. Our anabaptists do the same thing, but on this plea, that though baptism be, yet infant baptism is not an institution of Christ, and so is null from the nature of the thing itself, not the way of its administration: but this falls not within the verge of my defence.

In these several considerations we were, and do continue members in the church of God in England; and as to our failing herein, who is it that convinces us of sin?

The second thing inquired after, is, what subjection we stood, or were supposed to have stood in, to the bishops? Our subjection being regulated by their power, the consideration of *this*, discovers the true state of that.

They had, and exercised in this nation, a twofold ower; and consequently the subjection required of us as twofold.

1. A power delegated from the supreme magistrate of he nation, conferred on them, and invested in them, by the ws, customs, and usages of this commonwealth, and exrcised by them on that account. This not only made them arons of the realm, and members of parliament, and gave hem many dignities and privileges, but also was the sole ntain and spring of that jurisdiction, which they exerised by ways and means, such as themselves will not plead have been purely ecclesiastical, and of the institution of sus Christ. In this respect we did not cast off our subction to them; it being our duty to 'submit ourselves to ry ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake.' Only whenr they commanded things unlawful in themselves, or unto , we always retreated to the old safe rule, 'whether it be tt to obey you or God, judge ye.' On this foundation, I y, was all the jurisdiction which they exercised among d over the people of this nation built. They had not ve to exercise that, which they were invested in, on anher account, but received formally their authority thereby. he tenour whereby their predecessors held this power bere the reformation, the change of the tenour by the laws this land, the investiture of the whole original right reof in another person than formerly, by the same means, e legal concession and delegation to them made, the enging or contracting of their jurisdiction by the same laws, e civil process of their courts in the exercise of their aurity, sufficiently evince from whence they had it. Nor s any thing herein any more of the institution of Jesus hrist, than the courts are in Westminster Hall. Sir Edward ke, who knew the laws of his country, and was skilled in em to a miracle, will satisfy any in the rise and tenour of iscopal jurisdiction: 'De jure regis eccles.' What there of primitive institution, giving colour and occasion to is kind of jurisdiction, and the exercise of it, shall farther od assisting) be declared, when I treat of the state of the st churches, and the ways of their degeneracy; let them, ay for them, in the mean time evince the jurisdiction they ercised, *in respect whereunto* our subjection in the first

kind was required, to derive its original from the pure institution of Christ in the gospel, or to be any such thing as it was, in an imagined separation from the human laws whereby it was animated; and more will be asserted than I have had the happiness as yet to see. Now I say, that the subjection to them due, on this account, we did not cast off; but their whole authority, power, and jurisdiction was removed, taken away, and annulled by the people of the land assembled in parliament.

But this, they reply, is the state of the business in hand; the parliament, as much as in them lay, did so indeed as is confessed, and by so doing made the schism, which you by adhering to them, and joining with them in your several places, have made yourselves also guilty of.

But do these men know what they say, or will it ever trouble the conscience of a man in his right wits, to be charged with schism on this account? the parliament made alteration of nothing but what they found established by the laws of this nation, pleading that they had power committed to them to alter, abrogate, and annul laws, for the good of the people of the land. If their making alterations in the civil laws and constitutions, in the political administrations of the nation be schism, we have very little security, but that we may be made new schismatics every third year, whilst the constitution of a triennial parliament doth continue. In the removal then of all episcopal jurisdiction founded in the laws and usages of this nation, we are not at all concerned. For the laws enforcing it, do not press it as a thing necessary on any other account, but as that which themselves gave rise and life unto. But should this be granted, that the office was appointed by Christ, and the jurisdiction impleaded annexed by him thereunto; yet this, whilst we abide at diocesans, with the several divisions apportioned to them in the nation, will not suffice to constitute a national church, unless some union of those diocesans, or of the churches whereunto they related, into one society and church, by the same appointment, be proved, which to my present apprehension, will be no easy work for any one to undertake.

2. Bishops had here a power as ministers of the gospel, *to preach,* administer the sacraments, to join in the ordina-

on of ministers, and the like duties of church officers. To his we say, let the individuals of them acquit themselves, y the qualifications mentioned in the epistles to Timothy nd Titus, with a sedulous exercise of their duty in a due manner, according to the mind of Christ to be such indeed, nd we will still pay them all the respects, reverence, duty, nd obedience, which as such, by virtue of any law or insti-ution of Christ, they can claim. Let them come forth ith weapons that are not carnal, evidencing their ministry o the consciences of believers, acting in a spirit and power eceived from Christ, and who are they that will harm hem?

I had once formerly said thus much. 'Let the bishops ttend the particular flocks over which they are appointed, reaching the word, administering the holy ordinances of he gospel in and to their own flock, there will not be con-ending about them.' It was thought meet to return by one oncerned, 'I shall willingly grant herein my suffrage, let hem discharge them (and I beseech all, who have any way indered them, at length to let and quietly permit them) on ondition he will do this as carefully as I. I shall not con-end with him concerning the nature of their task, be it as e saith the attending to the particular churches over which hey are appointed (the bishop of Oxford over that flock or ortion, to which he was, and is appointed, and so all others n like manner), be it their preaching and their administering he holy ordinances of the gospel in and to their own flock, nd whatever else of duty and 'ratione officii' belongs to a ightly constituted bishop; and let all that have disturbed his course so duly settled in this church, and in all churches f Christ since the apostles' planting them, discern their rror, and return to that peace and unity of the church, from hence they have causelessly and inexcusably departed.'

Though I was not then speaking of the bishops of ngland, yet I am contented with the application to them; here being amongst them men of piety and learning, whom exceedingly honour and reverence: amongst all the bishops, e of Oxford is, I suppose, peculiarly instanced in, because t may be thought, that living in this place, I may belong to is jurisdiction. *But in the* condition wherein I now am by *ie providence of God, I* can plead an exemption on the

same foot of account, as he can his jurisdiction. So that I am not much concerned in his exercise of it, as to my own person. If he have a particular flock at Oxon, which he will attend according to what before I required, he shall have no let or hinderance from me; but being he is, as I hear he is, a reverend and learned person, I shall be glad of his neighbourhood and acquaintance. But to suppose that the diocese of Oxon, as legally constituted and bounded, is his particular flock or church, that such a church is instituted by Christ, or hath been in being ever since the apostles' times, that in his presidency in this church he is to set up courts, and exercise a jurisdiction in them, and therewith a power over all the inhabitants of this diocese or shire (excepting the exempt peculiar jurisdiction), although gathered into particular congregations, and united by a participation of the same ordinances; and all this by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, is to suppose what will not be granted. I confess, as before, there was once such an order in this place, and that it is now removed by laws, on which foundation alone it stood before: and this is that wherein I am not concerned. Whether we have causelessly and inexcusably departed from the unity of the church, is the matter now in inquiry. I am sure, unless the unity can be fixed, our departure will not be proved. A law unity I confess, an evangelical I am yet in the disquisition of. But I confess it will be to the prejudice of the cause in hand, if it shall be thought that the determination of it depends on the controversy about episcopacy: for if so, it might be righteously expected that the arguments produced in the behalf and defence thereof, should be particularly discussed. But the truth is, I shall easily acknowledge all my labour to no purpose, if I have to deal only with men, who suppose that if it be granted, that bishops, as commonly esteemed in this nation, are of the appointment of Christ, it will thence follow, that we have a national church of Christ's appointment: between which indeed there is no relation or connexion. Should I grant, as I said, diocesan bishops, with churches answerable to their supportment, particled into several congregations, with their inferior officers, yet this would be remote enough from giving subsistence and union to a *national church*.

What then it is which is called the church of England, a respect whereto we are charged with schism, is nextly to be considered.

Now there are two ways whereby we may come to the discovery of what is intended by the church of England; or there are two ways whereby such a thing doth arise.

1. ' Descendendo,' which is the way of the prelates.

2. ' Ascendendo,' which is the way of the Presbyterians.

For the first, to constitute a national church by descent, it must be supposed that all church power is vested in national officers, viz. archbishops, and from them derived to several diocesans by a distribution of power limited in its exercise to a certain portion of the nation, and by them communicated by several engines to parochial priests in their several places. A man with half an eye may see that here are many things to be proved.

Thus their first church is national, which is distributed into several greater portions termed provinces; those again into others, now called diocesses; and those again subdivided into parochial or particular congregations. Now the union of this church consisteth in the due observance of the same worship specifically by all the members of it, and subjection according to rules of their own appointment (which were called commonly canons), by way of distinction unto the rulers before mentioned in their several capacities. And this is that which is the peculiar form of this church. That of the church catholic absolutely so called is its unity with Christ, and in itself by the one Spirit whereby it is animated. That of the church catholic visibly professing the unity of the faith, which they do profess, as being by them professed. That of a particular church as such, its observance and performance of the same ordinance of worship numerically, in the confession of the same faith, and subjection to the same rules of love for edification of the whole. Of this national, as it is called, the unity consists in the subjection of one sort of officers unto another, within a precinct limited originally wholly on an account foreign to any church-state whatever. So that it is not called the church of England from its participation of the nature of the catholic church, on the account of its most noble members; nor yet from its participation of the *state of the visible church in the* world, on the account of its

profession of the truth; in both which respects we profess our unity with it; nor yet from its participation of the nature of a particular church, which it did not in itself, nor as such, but in some of its particular congregations; but from a peculiar form of its own, as above described, which is to be proved to be of the institution of Jesus Christ.

In this description given of their church-state, with whom we have now to do, I have purposely avoided the mention of things odious and exposed to common obloquy, which yet were the very ties and ligaments of their order, because the thing, as it is in itself, being nakedly represented, we may not be prejudiced in judging of the strength and utmost of the charge that lies against any of us, on the account of a departure from it.

The communion of this church, they say, we have forsaken, and broken its unity, and therefore are schismatics.

I answer in a word, laying aside so much of the jurisdiction of it mentioned before, and the several ways of its administration, for which there is no colour or pretence that it should relate to any gospel institution; pass by also the consideration of all those things which the men, enjoying authority in, or exercising the pretended power of this church, did use all their authority and power to enjoin and establish, which we judge evil; let them prove that such a national church as would remain with these things pared off, that is in its best estate imaginable, was ever instituted by Christ, or the apostles in his name, in all the things of absolute necessity to its being and existence, and I will confess myself to be what they please to say of me.

That there was such an order in things relating to the worship of God established by the law of the land, in and over the people thereof; that the worship pleaded for was confirmed by the same law; that the rulers mentioned had power, being by the magistrates assembled to make rules and canons to become binding to the good people of the commonwealth, when confirmed by the supreme authority of the nation, and not else; that penalties were appointed to the disturbers of this order by the same law, I grant. But that any thing of all this, as such, that is, as a part of this whole, or the whole itself, was instituted by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, that is denied. Let not any one

think, that because we deny the constitution pleaded about to have had the stamp of the authority of Jesus Christ, that therefore we pulled it down and destroyed it by violence. It was set up before we were born, by them who had power to make laws to bind the people of this nation, and we found men in an orderly legal possession of that power, which exerting itself several ways, maintained and preserved that constitution, which we had no call to eradicate. Only whereas they took upon them to act in the name of Christ also, and to interpose their orders and authority in the things of the worship of God, we entreated them that we might pass our pilgrimage quietly in our native country (as Israel would have gone through the land of Edom, without the disturbance of its inhabitants), and worship God according to the light which he had graciously imparted to us, but they would not hearken. But herein also was it our duty to keep the word of Christ's patience. Their removal, and the dissolution of this national church, arose, and was carried on, as hath been declared, by other hands, on other accounts.

Now it is not to any purpose, to plead the authority of the church, for many of the institutions mentioned; for neither hath any church power, or can have, to institute and appoint the things whereby it is made to be so; as these things are the very form of the church that we plead about; nor hath any church any authority but what is answerable to its nature: if itself be of a civil prudential constitution, its authority also is civil, and no more. Denying their church in that form of it, which makes it such to be of the institution of Christ, it cannot be expected that we should grant that it is, as such, invested with any authority from Christ, so that the dissolution of the unity of this church, as it had its rise on such an account, proceeded from an alteration of the human constitution whereon it was built; and how that was done, was before declared. Then let them prove,

1. That ordinary officers are before the church, and that in 'ecclesia instituta,' as well as 'instituenda,' which must be the foundation of their work. (We confess extraordinary officers were before the church, nor, considering the way of men's coming to be joined in such societies, was it possible it should *be otherwise; but* as for ordinary officers, they were

an exurgency from a church, and serve to the completion of it; Acts xiv. 23, 24. Tit. i. 5.)

2. That Christ hath appointed any national officers, with a plentitude of ordinary power, to be imparted, communicated, and distributed to other recipient subjects, in several degrees within one nation, and not elsewhere. I mean such an officer or officers, who in the first instance of their power, should on their own single account relate unto a whole nation.

3. That he hath instituted any national church, as the proper correlatum of such an officer; concerning which also I desire to be informed, whether a catalogue of those he hath so instituted, be to be obtained, or their number be left indefinite? whether they have limits and bounds prescribed to them by him, or are left to be commensurate to the civil dominion of any potentate, and so to enjoy or suffer the providential enlargements or straits, that such dominions are continually subject unto? whether we had seven churches here in England during the heptarchy of the Saxons, and one in Wales, or but one in the whole? If seven, how they came to be one? if but one, why those of England, Scotland, and Ireland, were not one also; especially since they have been under one civil magistrate? or whether the difference of the civil laws of these nations be not the only cause, that these are three churches? and if so, whether from thence any man may not discern whereon the unity of the church of England doth depend?

Briefly, when they have proved metropolitan, diocesan bishops in a firstness of power by the institution of Christ, a national church by the same institution in the sense pleaded for; a firstness of power in the national officers of that national church to impose a form of worship upon all being within that nation by the same institution, which should contain the bond of the union of that church; also, that every man who is born, and in his infancy baptized in that nation, is a member of that national church by the same institution, and shall have distinguished clearly in and about their administrations, and have told us what they counted to be of ecclesiastical power, and what they grant to be a mere emanation of the civil government of the *nation, we will* then treat with them about the business of

schism. Until then, if they tell us that we have forsaken the church of England in the sense pleaded for by them; I must answer, that which is wanting cannot be numbered. It is no crime to depart from nothing; we have not left to be that which we never were, which may suffice both us and them as to our several respective concernments of conscience and power. It hath been from the darkness of men, and ignorance of the Scriptures, that some have taken advantage to set up a product of the prudence of nations in the name of Jesus Christ, and on that account to require the acceptance of it. When the tabernacle of God is again all fixed amongst men, these shadows will fly away: in the mean time, we owe all these disputes, with innumerable other evils, to the apostacy of the Roman combination, from which we are far as yet from being clearly delivered.

I have one thing more to add upon the whole matter, and I shall proceed to what is lastly to be considered.

The church of England, as it is called (that is, the people thereof), separated herself from the church of Rome. To free herself from the imputation of schism in so doing, as they (that is, the learned men of the nation) pleaded the errors and corruptions of that church, under this especial consideration of their being imposed by tyrants; so also, by professing her design to be nothing but to reduce religion and the worship of God to its original purity, from which it was fallen. And we all jointly justify both her and all other reformed churches in this plea.

In her design to reduce religion to its primitive purity, she always professed, that she did not take her direction from the Scripture only, but also from the councils and examples of the four or five first centuries, to which she laboured to conform her reformation. Let the question now be, whether there be not corruptions in this church of England, supposing such a national state to be instituted. What, I beseech you, shall bind my conscience to acquiesce in what is pleaded from the four or five first centuries, consisting of men that could and did err, more than that did her's, which was pleaded from the nine or ten centuries following? Have not I liberty to call for reformation according to the Scripture only? or at least to profess that my conscience cannot be bound *to any other? The sum* is, the business of schism

from the church of England, is a thing built purely and simply on political considerations so interwoven with them, so influenced from them, as not to be separated. The famous advice of Mæcenas to Augustus, mentioned in Dio Cassius, is the best authority I know against it.

Before we part with this consideration, I must needs prevent one mistake, which perhaps in the mind of some may arise upon the preceding discourse: for whereas sundry ordinances of the worship of God are rightly to be administered only in a church, and ministers do evidently relate thereunto, the denying of a national church-state seems to deny that we had either ministers or ordinances here in England. The truth is, it seems so to do, but it doth not; unless you will say, that unless there be a national church-state, there is no other; which is too absurd for any one to imagine. It follows, indeed, that there were no national church officers, that there were no ordinances numerically the same to be administered in and to the nation at once; but that there was not another church-state in England, and on the account thereof, ordinances truly administered by lawful ministers, it doth not follow. And now if by this discourse I only call this business to a review, by them who are concerned to assert this national church, I am satisfied. That the church of England is a true church of Christ, they have hitherto maintained against the Romanists, on the account of the doctrine taught in it, and the successive ordination of its officers, through the church of Rome itself, from the primitive times. About the constitution and nature of a national church, they have had with them no contention: therein the parties at variance were agreed. The same grounds and principles, improved with a defence of the external worship and ceremonies established on the authority of the church, they managed against the nonconformists and separatists at home. But their chief strength against them, lay in arguments more forcible, which need not be repeated. The constitution of the church now impleaded, deserves as I said the review: hitherto it hath been unfurnished of any considerable defensative.

2. There is another way of constituting a national church, *which is insisted* on by some of our brethren of the presby-

terian way. This is, that such a thing should arise from the particular congregations that are in the nation, united by sundry associations and subordinations of assemblies in and by the representatives of those churches. So that though there cannot be an assembly of all the members of those churches in one place, for the performance of any worship of God; nor is there any ordinance appointed by Christ to be so celebrated in any assembly of them (which we suppose necessary to the constitution of a particular church), yet there may be an assembly of the representatives of them all by several elevations for some end and purpose.

In this sense, say some, a church may be called national, when all the particular congregations of one nation, living under one civil government, agreeing in doctrine and worship, are governed by their greater and lesser assemblies, (Jus Divinum Minist. Anglic. p. 12.) but I would be loath to exclude every man from being a member of the church in England, that is, from a share in the profession of the faith, which is owned and professed by the people of God in England; who is not a member of a particular congregation. Nor does subjection to one civil government, and agreement on the same doctrine and worship specifically, either jointly or severally constitute one church, as is known even in the judgment of these brethren. It is the last expression of lesser and greater assemblies that must do it; but as to any such institution of Christ, as a standing ordinance, sufficient to give unity, yea, or denomination to a church, this is the τὸ κρινόμενον. And yet this alone is to be insisted on. For, as was shewed before, the other things mentioned contribute nothing to the form nor union of such a church.

It is pleaded, that there are prophecies and promises of a national church, that should be under the New Testament, as Psal. xxxii. 10—12. Isa. ii. 2. x. 18, 19. 24, 25. That it is foretold and promised that many whole nations shall be converted to the faith of the gospel, and thereby become the people of God, who before were no people, is granted; but that their way of worship shall be by national churches governed by lesser and greater assemblies, doth not appear. And when the Jews shall be converted, they shall be a national church as England is: but their way of worship shall

be regulated according to the institution of Christ in the gospel. And therefore the publishers of the life of Dr. Gouge have expressed his judgment found in a paper in his study, that the Jews on their calling shall be gathered together into churches, and not be scattered, as now they are. A nation may be said to be converted, from the professed subjection to the gospel of so many in it, as may give demonstration to the whole: but the way of worship for those so converted, is peculiarly instituted. It is said, moreover, that the several congregations in one city, are called a church, as in Jerusalem; Acts vi. 1. xii. 1. 3. xv. 14. 22. So also may all the churches in a nation be called a national church. But this is τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ; nor is that allowed to be made a medium in another case, which at the same time is 'sub judice' in its own. The like also may be said of the church of Ephesus; Acts xx. 17. Rev. ii. 1. Nor is it about a mere denomination that we contend, but the union and form of such a church: and if more churches than one were together called a church, it is from their participation of the nature of the general visible church, not of that which is particular, and the seat of ordinances. So where Paul is said to persecute the church of God, Gal. i. 13. it is spoken of the professors of the faith of Christ in general, and not to be restrained to the churches of Judea, of whom he speaks, ver. 22, 23. seeing his rage actually reached to Damascus, a city of another nation, Acts xxii. 5, 6. and his design was πρὸς τὸ γένος. That by the church, mentioned 1 Cor. xii. 28. x. 32. Eph. iii. 21. is intended the whole visible church of Christ, as made up into one body or church, by a collection of all particular churches in the world by lesser and greater assemblies (a thing that never was in the world, nor ever will be), is denied, and not yet by any that I know proved: not that I am offended at the name of the church of England, though I think all professors, as such, are rather to be called so, than all the congregations. That all professors of the truth of the gospel, throughout the world, are the visible church of Christ, in the sense before explained, is granted. So may, on the same account, all the professors of that truth in England, be called the church of England. But it is the institution of lesser and greater assemblies, comprising the representatives of all the churches in the world,

that must give being and union to the visible church in the sense pleaded for throughout the world, or in this nation, and that bounded to this relation by virtue of the same institution that is to be proved.

But of what there is, or seems to be, of divine institution in this order and fabric, what of human prudent creation, what in the matter or manner of it I cannot assent unto, I shall not at present enter into the consideration; but shall only, as to my purpose in hand, take up some principles which lie in common between the men of this persuasion and myself, with some others otherwise minded. Now of these are the ensuing assertions.

1. No man can possibly be a member of a national church in this sense, but by virtue of his being a member of some particular church in the nation; which concurs to the making up of the national church. As a man doth not legally belong to any county in the nation, unless he belong to some hundred or parish in that county; this is evident from the nature of the thing itself. Nor is it pleaded, that we are one national church, because the people of the nation are generally baptized, and do profess the true faith, but because the particular congregations in it are ruled, and so consequently the whole, by lesser and greater assemblies. I suppose it will not be on second thoughts insisted on, that particular congregations, agreeing solemnly in doctrine and worship under one civil government, do constitute a national church; for if so, its form and unity, as such, must be given it merely by the civil government.

2. No man can recede from this church, or depart from it, but by departing from some particular church therein. At the same door that a man comes in, he must go out. If I cease to be a member of a national church, it is by the ceasing or abolishing of that, which gave me original right thereunto, which was my relation to the particular church, whereof I am.

3. To make men members of any particular church or churches, their own consent is required. All men must admit of this, who allow it free for a man to choose where he will fix his habitation.

4. That as yet, at least since possibly we could be personally concerned who are now alive, no such church in this

nation hath been formed. It is impossible that a man should be guilty of offending against that which is not: we have not separated from a national church in the presbyterian sense, as never having seen any such thing; unless they will say, we have separated from what should be.

5. As to the state of such a church as this, I shall only add to what hath been spoken before, the judgment of a very learned and famous man in this case, whom I the rather name, because professedly engaged on the Presbyterians' side. It is Moses Amyraldus, the present professor of divinity at Saumur, whose words are these that follow. 'Scio nonnunquam appellari particularem ecclesiam communionem, ac veluti confœderationem plurium ejusmodi societatum, quas vel ejusdem linguæ usus, vel eadem rei-pub. forma' (the true spring of a national church) 'una cum ejusdem disciplinæ regimine consociavit: sic appellatur ecclesia Gallicana, Anglicana, Germanica particularis, ut distinguatur ab universali illa Christianorum societate; quæ omnes Christiani nominis nationes complectitur: at uti supradiximus, ecclesiæ nomen non proprie convenire societati omnium Christianorum, eo modo quo convenit particularibus Christianorum cœtibus; sic consequens est, ut dicamus, ecclesiæ nomen non competere in eam multarum ecclesiarum particularium consociationem eodem plane modo. Vocetur ergo certe ecclesiarum quæ sunt in Gallia communio inter ipsas, et ecclesia si ecclesia, est multarum ecclesiarum confœderatio non si nomen ecclesiæ ex usu Scripturæ sacræ accipiatur. Paulus enim varias ecclesias particulares, quæ erant in Achaia, ecclesias Achaiæ nuncupat, non ecclesiam Achaiæ vel ecclesiam Achaicam.' Amyral. Disput. de Ecclesiæ Nom. et Defin. Thes. 28.

These being, if I mistake not, things of mutual acknowledgment (for I have not laid down any principles peculiar to myself, and those with whom I consent in the way of the worship of God, which yet we can justly plead in our own defence), this whole business will be brought to a speedy issue.

Only I desire the reader to observe, that I am not pleading the right, liberty, and duty of gathering churches in such a state of professors, as that of late, and still amongst us, which is built on other principles and hypo-

theses, than any as yet I have had occasion to mention; but am only in general considering the true notion of schism, and the charge managed against us on that single account, which relates not to gathering of churches, as simply considered. I say, then,

1. Either we have been members by our own voluntary consent, according to the mind of Christ, of some particular congregations in such a national church, and that as 'de facto' part of such a church, or we have not. If we have not been so (as it is most certain we have not), then we have not as yet broken any bond, or violated any unity, or disturbed any peace or order of the appointment of Jesus Christ; so that whatever of trouble or division hath followed on our way and walking, is to be charged on them who have turned every stone, to hinder us our liberty. And I humbly beg of them, who acting on principles of reformation according to the (commonly called) presbyterian platform, do accuse us for separation from the church of England, that they would seriously consider what they intend thereby. Is it that we are departed from the faith of the people of God in England? they will not sustain any such crimination. Is it that we have forsaken the church of England as under its episcopal constitution? have they not done the same? have they not rejected their national officers, with all the bonds, ties, and ligaments of the union of that pretended church? have they not renounced the way of worship established by the law of the land? do they not disavow all obedience to them who were their legal superiors in that constitution? do they retain either matter or form, or any thing, but that naked name of that church? and will they condemn others in what they practise themselves? As for a church of England, in their new sense (which yet in some respects is not new, but old), for what is beyond a voluntary consociation of particular churches, we have not as yet had experience of it.

That we shall be accused of schism, for not esteeming ourselves made members of a particular church against our wills, by buying or hiring a habitation within such a precinct of ground, we expect not; especially considering what is delivered by the chief leaders of them, with whom now we are treating, whose words are as followeth: 'We grant,

that living in parishes is not sufficient to make a man a member of a particular church. A Turk, or pagan, or idolater, may live within the precincts of a parish, and yet be no member of a church. A man must, therefore, in order of nature, be a member of the church visible, and then living in a parish, and making profession of Christianity, may claim admission into the society of Christians within those bounds, and enjoy the privileges and ordinances which are there dispensed;' Ans. of Commit. p. 105. This is also pursued by the authors of Jus Divinum Ministerii Anglicani, p. 9, 10. where, after the repetition of the words first mentioned, they add, that 'all that dwell in a parish and constantly hear the word, are not yet to be admitted to the sacraments;' which excludes them from being 'fideles,' or church-members, and makes them at best as the catechumeni of old, who were never esteemed members of the church.

If we have been so members by our own voluntary consent, and do not continue so to be, then this congregation wherein we are so members, was reformed according to the mind of Christ (for I speak now to them that own reformation, as to their light) or it was not. If it were reformed, and that a man were a member of it so reformed by his own voluntary consent, I confess it may be difficult how a man can leave such a congregation without their consent, in whose power it is to give it him, without giving offence to the church of God. Only I say, let all by-respects be laid aside on the one hand, and on the other, all regard to repute and advantage, let love have its perfect work, and no church, knowing the end of its being and constitution to be the edification of believers, will be difficult and tenacious as to the granting a dismission to any member whatever that shall humbly desire it, on the account of applying himself to some other congregation, wherein he supposes and is persuaded that he may be more effectually built up in his most holy faith.

I confess this to be a case of the greatest difficulty that presents itself to my thoughts in this business. Suppose a man to be a member of a particular church, and that church to be a true church of Christ, and granted so by this person, and yet upon the account of some defect, which is in, or at least he is convinced and persuaded to be in, that church,

whose reformation he cannot obtain, he cannot abide in that church to his spiritual advantage and edification; suppose the church on the other side, cannot be induced to consent to his secession and relinquishment of its ordinary external communion, and that person is hereby entangled; what course is to be taken? I profess, for my part, I never knew this case fall out wherein both parties were not blameable. The person seeking to depart, in making that to be an indispensable cause of departure from a church, which is far short of it; and the church in not condescending to the man's desire, though proceeding from infirmity or temptation. In general, the rule of forbearance and condescension in love, which should salve the difference, is to give place to the rule of obeying God in all things according to our light: and the determining in this case, depending on circumstances in great variety, both with reference to the church offending and the person offended. He that can give one certain rule in and upon the whole, shall have much praise for his invention. However, I am sure this cannot be rationally objected by them, who esteeming all parishes, as such, to be churches, do yet allow men on such occasions to change their habitations, and consequently their church relations. 'Men may be relieved by change of dwelling;' Sub-com. of Div. p. 52. And when a man's leaving the ordinary external communion of any particular church for his own edification, to join with another whose administration he is persuaded in some things more, or fewer, are carried on more according to the mind of Christ, is as such proved to be schism, I shall acknowledge it.

As then the not giving a man's self up unto any way, and submitting to any establishment pretended, or pleaded to be of Christ, which he hath not light for, and which he was not by any act of his own formerly engaged in, cannot with any colour or pretence of reason be reckoned unto him for schism, though he may, if he persist in his refusal, prejudice his own edification; so no more can a man's peaceable relinquishment of the ordinary communion of one church in all its relations, to join with another, be so esteemed. For instance of the first case; suppose by the law of this nation the several parochial churches *of the land, according* to arbitrary distributions

made of them, should be joined in classical associations, and those again in the like arbitrary disposal into provincial, and so onward (which cannot be done without such interveniences as will exonerate conscience from the weight of pure institution); or suppose this not to be done by the law of the land, but by the voluntary consent of the officers of the parochial churches, and others joining with them; the saints of God in this nation, who have not formerly been given up unto, or disposed of, in this order, by their own voluntary consent, nor are concerned in it any farther, than by their habitation within some of these different precincts, that by public authority, or consent of some amongst them, are combined as above; nor do believe such associations to be the institutions of Christ, whatever they prove to be in the issue; I say, they are by their dissent and refusal to subject themselves to this order, not in the least liable to the charge of schism; whatever they are, who neglecting the great duty of love and forbearance, would by any means whatever impose upon them a necessity of so doing. For besides what they have to plead, as to the non-institution of any such ordinary associations, and investiture of them with power and authority in and over the churches, they are not guilty of the disturbance of any order, wherein they were stated according to the mind of Christ; nor of the neglect of any duty of love that was incumbent on them.

For the latter; suppose a man stated in a particular church, wherewith he hath walked for a season, he discovers that some perhaps of the principles of its constitution are not according to the mind of Christ, something is wanting or redundant, and imposed in practice on the members of it, which renders the communion of it, by reason of his doubts and scruples, or it may be clear convictions, not so useful to him as he might rationally expect it would be, were all things done according to the mind of Christ; that also he hath declared his judgment as he is able, and dissatisfaction: if no reformation do ensue, this person, I say, is doubtless at liberty to dispose of himself, as to particular church-communion, to his own best advantage.

But now suppose this congregation whereof a man is supposed to be a member, is not reformed, will not nor cannot *reform itself* (I desire that it may be minded with whom

o do, viz. those who own a necessity of reformation,
e administration of ordinances, in respect to what
n hitherto observed in most parochial assemblies).
have formerly dealt withal are not to be imposed on
principle of reformation; they acknowledge none
edful; but they are not concerned in our present
Their charge lies all in the behalf of the church of
, not of particular assemblies or parishes, which it
ssible that according to their principle, they should
churches, or account any separation from any of
be blameworthy, but only as it respecteth the con-
s of the church national in them to be observed. If
n arise on that hand, as to parochial assemblies, I
ake liberty to examine the foundation of the plea,
bt not, but that I may easily frustrate their attempts.
is not my present business; I deal, as I said, with
o own reformation; and I now suppose the congre-
whereof a man is supposed to be a member on any
whatever, not to be reformed.
his case, I ask, whether it be schism or no, for any
of men to reform themselves, by reducing the prac-
orship to its original institution, though they be the
rt lying within the parochial precinct; or for any of
join themselves with others for that end and pur-
living within those precincts? I shall boldly say,
sm is commanded by the Holy Ghost, 1 Tim. vi. 5.
ii. 5. Hos. iv. 15. Is this yoke laid upon me by
hat to go along with the multitude where I live, that
e reformed, I must forsake my duty, and despise the
s that he hath purchased for me with his own pre-
od? Is this a unity of Christ's institution, that I
ever associate myself with wicked and profane men
rship of God, to the unspeakable detriment and dis-
e of my own soul?
pose nothing can be more unreasonable than once to
any such thing.
ever, not to drive this business any farther, but to
its proper issue. When it is proved, that this is the
appointment of Jesus Christ, that every believer,
h within such a precinct allotted by civil constitu-
erein the people or inhabitants do, or may usually

meet for the celebration of the worship of God, or which they have light for, or on any account whatever do make profession of, how profane soever that part of them be from whom the whole is denominated, how corrupt soever in their worship, how dead soever as to the power of godliness, must abide with them and join with them in their administrations and worship, and that indispensably; this business may come again under debate. In the mean time, I suppose the people of God are not in any such subjection. I speak not this as laying down this for a principle, that it is the duty of every man to separate from that church, wherein evil and wicked men are tolerated (though that opinion must have many other attendances before it can contract the least affinity with that of the same sound, which was condemned in the Donatists), but this only, I say, that where any church is overborne by a multitude of men wicked and profane, so that it connot reform itself, or will not according to the mind of Christ, a believer is so far at liberty, that he may desert the communion of that society without the least guilt of schism. But this state of things is now little pleaded for.

It is usually objected about the church of Corinth, that there was in it many disorders and enormous miscarriages, divisions, and breaches of love: miscarriages through drink at their meetings; gross sins in the incestuous person tolerated; false doctrine broached; the resurrection denied; and yet Paul advises no man to separate from it, but all to perform their duty in it.

But how little our present plea and defensative is concerned in this instance, supposed to lie against it, very few considerations will evince.

1. The church of Corinth was undoubtedly a true church, lately instituted according to the mind of Christ, and was not fallen from that privilege by any miscarriage, nor had suffered any thing destructive to its being; which wholly differences between the case proposed in respect of many particulars, and the instance produced. We confess the abuses and evils mentioned had crept into the church, and do thence grant, that many abuses may do so into any of the best of the churches of God. Nor did it ever enter into the heart of any man to think, that so soon as any disorders fall out, or abuses creep into it, it is instantly the duty of any

to fly out of it, like Paul's mariners out of the ship, when the storm grew hazardous. It being the duty of all the members of such a church, untainted with the evils and corruptions of it, upon many accounts to attempt and labour the remedy of those disorders, and rejection of these abuses to the uttermost; which was that, which Paul advised the Corinthians all and some unto, in obedience whereunto they were recovered. But yet this I say, had the church of Corinth continued in the condition before prescribed, that notorious, scandalous sins had went unpunished, unreproved, drunkenness continued, and practised in the assembles, men abiding by the denial of the resurrection, so overturning the whole gospel, and the church refusing to do her duty, and exercise her authority to cast all those disorderly persons upon their obstinacy out of her communion; it had been the duty of every saint of God in that church, to have withdrawn from it, to come out from among them, and not to have been partaker of their sins, unless they were willing to partake of their plague also; which on such an apostacy would certainly ensue.

I confess Austin, in his single book against the Donatists, Post Collationem, cap. 20. affirms, that Elijah and Elisha communicated with the Israelites in their worship, when they were so corrupted, as in their days, and separated not from their sacraments (as he calls them), but only withdrew sometimes for fear of persecution; a mistake unworthy so great and wise a person as he was. The public worship of those ten tribes in the days of those prophets was idolatrous, erected by Jeroboam, confirmed by a law, by Omri, and continued by Ahab. That the prophets joined with them in it, is not to be imagined. But earnestness of desire for the attaining of any end, sometimes leaves no room for the examination of the mediums, offering their service to that purpose.

Let us now see the sum of the whole matter, and what it is that we plead for our discharge as to this crime of schism, allowing the term to pass in its large and usual acceptation, receding for the sake of the truth's farther ventilation, from the precise propriety of the word annexed to it in the Scripture: the sum is, we have broken no bond of unity, no order instituted or appointed by Jesus Christ, have causelessly

deserted no station, that ever we were in, according to his mind, which alone can give countenance to an accusation of this nature. That on pure grounds of conscience we have withdrawn, or do withhold ourselves from partaking in some ways, engaged into upon mere grounds of prudence we acknowledge.

And thus from what hath been said, it appears in what a fair capacity, notwithstanding any principle or practice owned by us, we are to live peaceably, and to exercise all fruits of love towards those who are otherwise minded.

There is not the least necessity on us, may we be permitted to serve God according to our light, for the acquitting ourselves from the charge, which hath made such a noise in the world, to charge other men with their failings, great or small, in or about the ways and worship of God. This only is incumbent on us, that we manifest that we have broken no bond, no obligation, or tie to communion, which lay upon us by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ our Lord and Master: what is prudentially to be done in such a nation as this, in such a time as this, as to the worship of God, we will treat with men at farther leisure, and when we are lawfully called thereto.

It may be some will yet say (because it hath been often said), there is difference between reforming of churches already gathered and raised, and raising of churches out of mere materials. The first may be allowed, but the latter tends to all manner of confusion.

I have at present, not much to say to this objection, because, as I conceive, it concerns not the business we have in hand: nor would I have mentioned it at all, but that it is insisted on by some on every turn, whether suited for the particular cause for which it is produced, or no. In brief, then,

1. I know no other reformation of any church, or any thing in a church, but the reducing of it to its primitive institution, and the order allotted to it by Jesus Christ. If any plead for any other reformation of churches, they are in my judgment to blame.

And when any society, or combination of men (whatever hitherto it hath been esteemed), is not capable of such a reduction and renovation, I suppose I shall not provoke any

wise and sober person, if I profess, I cannot look on such a society as a church of Christ, and thereupon advise those therein who have a due right to the privileges purchased for them by Christ, as to gospel administrations, to take some other peaceable course to make themselves partakers of them.

2. Were I fully to handle the things pointed to in this objection, I must manage principles, which in this discourse I have not been occasioned to draw forth at all, or to improve. Many things of great weight and importance must come under debate and consideration, before a clear account can be given of the case stated in this objection. As,

1. The true nature of an instituted church under the gospel, as to the matter, form, and all other necessary constitutive causes, is to be investigated and found out.

2. The nature and form of such a church is to be exemplified from the Scripture, and the stories of the first churches, before sensibly infested with the poison of that apostacy which ensued.

3. The extent of the apostacy under antichrist, as to the ruining of instituted churches, making them to be Babylon, and their worship fornication, is duly and carefully to be examined.

Hic labor, hoc opus.

Here lies our disorder and division; hence is our darkness and pollution of our garments, which is not an easy thing to free ourselves of; though we may arise, yet we shall not speedily shake ourselves out of the dust.

4. By what way and means God begat anew, and kept alive his elect, in their several generations, when antichristian darkness covered the earth, and thick darkness the nations, supposing an intercision of instituted ordinances, so far as to make a nullity in them, as to what was of simple and pure institution; what way might be used for the fixing the tabernacle of God again with men, and the setting up of church worship according to his mind and will. And here the famous cause of the united brethren of Bohemia would come under consideration; who concluding the whole papacy to be purely antichristian, could not allow of the ordination of their ministers by any in communion with it; and yet being persuaded of a necessity of continuing of that ordinance in a way *of succession*, sent some to the Greek and

Armenian churches, who observing their ways returned with little satisfaction; so that at last committing themselves and their cause to God, they chose them elders from among themselves, and set them apart by fasting and prayer; which was the foundation of all those churches, which for piety, zeal, and suffering for Christ, hath given place to none in Europe.

What was the way of the first reformation in this nation, and what principles the godly learned men of those days proceeded on, how far what they did may be satisfactory to our consciences, at the present, as to our concurrence in them, who from thence have the truth of the gospel derived down to us; whether ordinary officers be before or after the church, and so whether a church-state is preserved in the preservation of officers, by a power foreign to that church, whereof they are so; or the office be preserved, and consequently the officers, inclusively in the preservation, and constitution of a church: these, I say, with sundry other things of the like importance, with inferences from them, are to be considered to the bottom, before a full resolution can be given to the inquiry couched in this objection, which, as I said, to do, is not my present business.

This task then is at its issue and close; some considerations of the manifold miscarriages that have ensued for want of a due and right apprehension of the thing we have now been exercised in the consideration of, shall shut it up.

1. It is not impossible, that some may, from what hath been spoken, begin to apprehend that they have been too hasty in judging other men. Indeed none are more ready to charge highly, than those who when they have so done, are most unable to make good their charge; 'si accusasse sufficiat, quis erit innocens?' what real schisms in a moral sense have ensued among brethren, by their causeless mutual imputation of schism in things of institution, is known. And when men are in one fault, and are charged with another, wherein they are not, it is a ready way to confirm them in that wherein they are. There is more darkness and difficulty in the whole matter of instituted worship, than some men are aware of; not that it was so from the beginning, whilst Christianity continued in its naked simplicity; but it is come occasionally upon us by the customs, darkness,

and invincible prejudices, that have taken hold on the minds of men by a secret diffusion of the poison of that grand apostacy. It were well, then, that men would not be so confident, nor easily persuaded, that they presently know how all things ought to be, because they know how they would have some things to be, which suit their temper and interest. Men may easily perhaps see, or think they see, what they do not like, and cry out schism and separation, but if they would a little consider what ought to be in this whole matter, according to the mind of God, and what evidences they have of the grounds and principles, whereon they condemn others, it might make them yet swift to hear, but slow to speak, and take off from the number of teachers among us; some are ready to think, that all that join not with them are schismatics; and they are so, because they go not with them, and other reason they have none; being unable to give any solid foundation of what they profess; what the cause of unity among the people of God hath suffered from this sort of men, is not easily to be expressed.

2. In all differences about religion to drive them to their rise and spring, and to consider them as stated originally, will ease us of much trouble and labour. Perhaps many of them will not appear so formidable, as they are represented. He that sees a great river, is not instantly to conclude that all the water in it comes from its first rise and spring, the addition of many brooks, showers, and landfloods, have perhaps swelled it to the condition wherein it is; every difference in religion is not to be thought to be as big at its rise, as it appears to be when it hath passed through many generations, and hath received additions and aggravations from the disputings and contendings of men, on the one hand and the other engaged. What a flood of abominations doth this business of schism seem to be, as rolling down to us through the writings of Cyprian, Austin, and Optatus of old; the schoolmen, decrees of popish councils, with the contrivances of some among ourselves, concerned to keep up the swelled notion of it! Go to its rise, and you will find it to be, though bad enough, yet quite another thing, than what by the prejudices accruing by the addition of so many generations, it is now generally represented to

The great maxim, 'to the law and to the testimony,' truly improved, would quickly cure all our distempers: in the mean time, let us bless God, that though our outward man may possibly be disposed of, according to the apprehension that others have of what we do, or are, our consciences are concerned only in what he hath appointed. How some men may prevail against us, before whom we must stand or fall according to their corrupt notion of schism, we know not; the rule of our consciences, in this, as in all other things, is eternal and unchangeable. Whilst I have an uncontrollable faithful witness, that I transgress no limits prescribed to me in the word, that I do not willingly break, or dissolve any unity of the institution of Jesus Christ, my mind, as to this thing, is filled with perfect peace. Blessed be God, that hath reserved the sole sovereignty of our consciences in his hand, and not in the least parcelled it out to any of the sons of men, whose tender mercies being oftentimes cruelty itself, they would perhaps destroy the soul also, when they do so to the body, seeing they stay there, as our Saviour witnesseth, because they can proceed no farther. Here then I profess to rest, in this doth my conscience acquiesce; whilst I have any comfortable persuasion, on grounds infallible, that I hold the head, and that I am by faith a member of the mystical body of Christ, whilst I make profession of all the necessary saving truths of the gospel, whilst I disturb not the peace of that particular church, whereof by my own consent I am a member, nor do raise up, nor continue in any causeless differences with them, or any of them, with whom I walk in the fellowship and order of the gospel, whilst I labour to exercise faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and love towards all the saints, I do keep the unity which is of the appointment of Christ; and let men say, from principles utterly foreign to the gospel, what they please or can to the contrary, I am no schismatic.

3. Perhaps the discovery which hath been made, how little we are many of us concerned in that, which, having mutually charged it on one another, hath been the greatest ball of strife, and most effectual engine of difference, and distance between us, may be a means to reconcile in love

them that truly fear God, though engaged in several ways as to some particulars. I confess I have not any great hope of much success on this account; for let principles and ways be made as evident, as if he that wrote them carried the sun in his hand; yet, whilst men are forestalled by prejudices, and have their affections and spirits engaged suitably thereunto, no great alteration in their minds and ways, on the clearest conviction whatever, is to be expected. All our hearts are in the hand of God; and our expectations of what he hath promised are to be proportioned to what he can effect, not to what of outward means we see to be used.

4. To conclude; what vain janglings men are endlessly engaged in, who will lay their own false hypotheses and preconceptions, as a ground of farther procedure, is also in part evident, by what hath been delivered. Hence, for instance, is that doubty dispute in the world, whether a schismatic doth belong to the church, or no? which for the most part is determined in the negative; when it is impossible a man should be so, but by virtue of his being a church member. A church is that 'alienum solum,' wherein that evil dwelleth. The most of the inquiries that are made, and disputed on, whether this or that sort of men belong to the church or no? are of the same value and import. He belongs to the church catholic, who is united to Christ by the Spirit, and none other. And he belongs to the church general visible, who makes profession of the faith of the gospel, and destroys it not by any thing of a just inconsistency with the belief of it. And he belongs to a particular church, who having been in a due order joined thereunto, hath neither voluntarily deserted it, nor been judicially ejected out of it. Thus one may be a member of the church catholic, who is no member of the general visible church, nor of a particular church, as an elect infant, sanctified from the womb, dying before baptism; and one may be a member of the church general visible, who is no member of the church catholic, nor of a particular church, as a man making profession of the true faith, yet not united to Christ by the Spirit, nor joined to any particular visible church; or he may be also of the catholic church, and not

of a particular; as also of a particular church, and
the catholic. And a man may be, every true believer we
orderly, ordinarily is, a member of the church of Chr
every sense insisted on; of the catholic church, by a
with Christ the head; of the visible general church, l
profession of the faith; and of a particular congregati
his voluntary associating himself therewith, accordi
the will and appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A REVIEW

OF THE

TRUE NATURE OF SCHISM,

WITH

A VINDICATION

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN ENGLAND

FROM THE IMPUTATION THEREOF;
UNJUSTLY CHARGED ON THEM BY MR. D. CAWDREY,
PREACHER OF THE WORD,
AT BILLING, IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Δοῦλον Κυρίου οὐ δεῖ μάχεσθαι.—2 Tim. ii. 24.
Δεῖ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι, ὡς Θεοῦ οἰκονόμον, μὴ αὐθάδη, μὴ ὀργίλον, μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ.—Tit. i. 7.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

IT is now about three weeks since, that there was sent unto me, a book entitled, Independency a Great Schism: as the frontispiece farther promiseth, undertaken to be managed against something written by me, in a treatise about the true nature of schism, published about a year ago; with an addition of a charge of inconstancy in opinion, upon myself: of the one, and the other, the ensuing discourse will give a farther and full account. Coming unto my hands at such a season, wherein, as it is known, I was pressed with more than ordinary occasions of sundry sorts, I thought to have deferred the examination of it, until farther leisure might be obtained, supposing that some fair advantage would be administered by it, to a farther Christian debate of that discovery of truth, and tender of peace, which in my treatise I had made. Engaging into a cursory perusal of it, I found the reverend author's design and discourse, to be of that tendency and nature, as did not require, nor would admit of any such delay. His manifold mistakes in apprehending the intention of my treatise and of the severals of it; his open presumption of his own principles, as the source and spring of what pretends to be argumentative in his discourse, arbitrarily inferring from them, without the least attempt of proof, whatever tenders its assistance to cast reproach on them with whom he hath to do; his neglect in providing a defence for himself by any principles not easily turned upon him, against the same charge which he is pleased to manage against me; his avowed laying the foundation of his whole fabric, in the sand of notoriously false suppositions, quickly delivered me from the thoughts *of any necessity to* delay the consideration of

what he tendered to make good the title of his discourse. The open and manifest injury done, not only to myself, in laying things to my charge which I know not, lading me with reproaches, tending to a rendering of me odious to all the ministers and churches in the world, not agreeing with me in some few things concerning gospel administrations, but also to all other churches and persons of the same judgment with myself, called for a speedy account of the true state of the things contended about.

Thou hast therefore here, Christian reader, the product (through the grace of him who supplieth seed to the sower) of the spare hours of four or five days, in which space of time this ensuing discourse was begun and finished. Expect not therefore any thing from it, but what is necessary for the refutation of the book, whereunto it is opposed; and as to that end and purpose, I leave it to thy strictest judgment. Only I shall desire thee to take notice, that having kept myself to a bare defence, I have resolvedly forborne all recharge on the presbyterian way, either as to the whole of it, whence by way of distinction it is so called, or as to the differences in judgment and practice of them who profess that way, among themselves, which at this day, both in this and the neighbour nation, are more and greater, than any that our author hath as yet been able to find amongst them whom he doth principally oppose. As the ensuing sheets were almost wrought off at the press, there came to my hand a vindication of that eminent servant of God, Mr. John Cotton, from the unjust imputations and charge of the reverend person with whom I have now to do, written by himself not long before his death. The opportunity of publishing that discourse, with the ensuing, being then lost, I thought meet to let the reader know, that a short season will furnish him with it. Farewell, and love, truth, and peace.

Christ Church College, Oxon. July 9, 1657.

A

VINDICATION OF THE TREATISE

ABOUT

THE TRUE NATURE OF SCHISM,

&c.

CHAP. I.

THE present state of things in the Christian world, will on a light consideration yield this account of controversies in religion; that when they are driven to such an issue, as by foreign coincidences to be rendered the interest of parties at variance, there is not any great success to be obtained by a management of them, though with never so much evidence and conviction of truth. An answering of the profession that is on us, by a good and lawful means, the paying of that homage and tribute we owe to the truth, the tendering of assistance to the safe-guarding of some weaker professors therefrom the sophisms and violence of adversaries, is the most that in such a posture of things, the most sober writers of controversies can well aim at.

The winning over of men to the truth we seek to maintain, where they have been pre-engaged in an opposition unto it, without the alteration of the outward state of things, whence their engagements have insensibly sprung and risen, is not ordinarily to be expected. How far I was from any such thoughts in the composing and publishing my treatise of the nature of schism, I declared in sundry passages in the treatise itself. Though the thing contended about, whatsoever is pretended to the contrary, will not be found amongst the most important heads of our religion, yet knowing how far, on sundry accounts, the stated fixed interest of several sorts of men engageth them to abide by the principles they own in reference thereunto, I was so far from hoping to see speedily any *visible fruits of* the efficacy of the truth I had

managed, that I promised myself a vigorous opposition, until some urgent providence or time, altering the frame of men's spirits, should make way for its acceptance. Freely I left it in the hand of him, whose truth I have good security I had in weakness maintained, to dispose of it with its issues and events at his pleasure. I confess, knowing several parties to be concerned in an opposition to it, I was not well able to conjecture from what hand the first assault of it would arise. Probability cast it on them who looked on themselves in the nearest proximity of advantage by the common notion of schism opposed. The truth is, I did apprehend myself not justly chargeable with want of charity, if I thought that opposition would arise from some other principles, than mere zeal for a supposed truth, and therefore took my aim in conjecturing at the prejudices that men might fear themselves and interests obnoxious unto by a reception and establishment of that notion of schism, which I had asserted. Men's contentedness to make use of their quietness in reference to popery, Socinianism, Arminianism, daily vented amongst us, unless it were in some declamatory expressions against their toleration, which cost no more than they are worth, if shaken off by a speedy engagement against my treatise, confirmed such thoughts in me. After, therefore, it had passed in the world for some season, and had found acceptance with many learned and godly persons, reports began to be raised about a design for a refutation of it: that so it should be dealt withal I heard was judged necessary at sundry conventions; what particular hand it was likely the task would fall upon, judging myself not concerned to know, I did not inquire. When I was informed how the disposal of the business did succeed, as I was not at all surprised in reference to the party in general from which it did issue, so I did relieve myself under my fears, and loathing to be engaged in these contests, by these ensuing considerations. 1. That I was fully persuaded that what I had written was for the substance of it the truth of God, and being concerned in it only on truth's account, if it could be demonstrated that the sentence I had asserted, was an unlawful pretender thereunto, I should be delivered from paying any farther respect or service to that, whereunto none at *all was* due. 2. That in the treatise itself so threatened, I

had laid in provision against all contending about words, expressions, collateral assertions, deductions, positions, all and every thing, though true, that might be separated from the life or substance of the notion, or truth pleaded for. 3. That whereas the whole weight of the little pile turned on one single hinge, and that visible and conspicuous, capable of an ocular demonstration, as to its confirmation or refutation, I promised myself that any man who should undertake the demolishing of it, would be so far from passing that by, and setting himself to the superstruction, that subsists in its single strength and vigour, that indeed finding that one thing necessary for him, he would solely attempt that, and therein rest. This I knew was evident to any considering person that should but view the treatise, that if that foundation were cast down, the whole superstructure would fall with its own weight; but if left standing, a hundred thousand volumes against the rest of the treatise could not in the least prejudice the cause undertaken to be managed in it. Men might indeed by such attempts manifest my weakness and want of skill, in making inferences and deductions from principles of truth, wherein I am not concerned, but the truth itself contended for, would still abide untouched. 4. Having expressly waved man's day and judgment, I promised myself security from a disturbance by urging against me the authority of any, of old or late; supposing that from the eviction of their several interests, I had emancipated myself from all subjection to their bare judgments in this cause. 5. Whereas I had confined myself to a bare defensative of some, not intending to cast others from the place, which in their own apprehensions they do enjoy (unless it was the Roman party), I had some expectations that peace-loving godly men, would not be troubled that an apparent immunity from a crime was without their prejudice or disadvantage manifested in behalf of their brethren, nor much pain themselves to reinforce the charge accounted for. So that the bare notion of schism, and the nature of it abstracted from the consideration of persons, would come under debate. Indeed, I questioned whether in that friendly composure of affections, which for sundry years hath been carrying on between sober and godly men of the presbyterian and congregational judgment, any person of real godliness would

interest himself to blow the coal of dissension, and engage in new exasperations. I confess I always thought the plea of Cicero for Ligarius against Tubero most unreasonable, namely, that if he had told (as he calls it) an honest and merciful lie in his behalf, yet it was not the part of a man to refel it, especially of one who was accused of the same crime; but yet I must needs say, a prompt readiness to follow most questionable accusations against honest defensatives, from good men unjustly accused by others of the same crime, I did not expect. I added this also in my thoughts, that the facility of rendering a discourse to the purpose, on the business under consideration, was obviated by its being left out of the common road, wherein common-place supplies would be of little use to any that should undertake it; not once suspecting that any man of learning and judgment would make a return unto it out of vulgar discourses about ministers' calling, church-government, or the like. How far these and the like considerations might be a relief unto my thoughts, in my fears of farther controversial engagements, having the pressure of more business upon me than any one man I know of my calling in the whole nation, I leave it to the judgment of them who love truth and peace. But what little confidence I ought, in the present posture of the minds of men, to have placed in any or all of them, the discourse under consideration hath instructed me. That any one thing hath fallen out according to my expectations and conjectures, but only its being a product of the men, of the persuasions owned therein, I am yet to seek. The truth is, I cannot blame my adversary 'viis et modis' to make good the opposition he is engaged in; it concerns him and his advisers beyond their interest in the appearing skirts of this controversy. Perhaps, also, an adjudged necessity of endeavouring a disreputation to my person and writings, was one ingredient in the undertaking; if so, the whole frame was to be carried on by correspondent mediums. But let the principles and motives to this discourse be what they will, it is now made public, there being a warmer zeal acting therein, than in carrying on some other things expected from the same hand.

To what may seem of importance in it, I shall with all *possible* plainness give a return. Had the reverend author

thought good to have kept within the bounds by me
, and candidly debated the notion proposed, abstract-
om the provocations of particular applications, I should
willingly have taken pains for a farther clearing and
festing of the truth contended about.

ut the whole discourse wherewith I have now to do is
other complexion, and the design of it of another ten-
y; yea, so managed sometimes, that I am ready to
ion whether it be the product and fruit of his spirit
e name it bears: for though he be an utter stranger to
et I have received such a character of him, as would
me to an expectation of any thing from him, rather
such a discourse.

he reader will be able to perceive an account of these
ghts in the ensuing view of his treatise.

. I am without any provocation intended, and I hope
, reviled from one end of it to the other; and called,
y in downright terms, partly by oblique intimations,
e reflections are not to be waved, Satan, atheist, scep-
Donatist, heretic, schismatic, sectary, Pharisee, &c. and
losure of the book is merely an attempt to blast my re-
tion, whereof I shall give a speedy account.

. The professed design of the whole is to prove inde-
ency, as he is pleased to call it, which what it is he
ares not, nor (as he manages the business) do I know
a great schism, and that Independents (by whom it is
ell known whom he intends) are schismatics, secta-
the troublers of England. So that it were happy for
nation, if they were out of it; or discovering san-
ary thoughts in reference unto them; and these kinds
iscourses fill up the book, almost from one end to the
r.

. No Christian care doth seem to have been taken, nor
conscience exercised from the beginning to the ending,
imputation of any thing unto me, or upon me, that may
to help on the design in hand.

ience, I think, it is repeated near a hundred times, that
ny their ministers to be ministers, and their churches
e churches, that I deny all the reformed churches in the
d, but only our own (as he calls them) to be true
ches; all *which is notoriously* untrue, contrary to my

known judgment, professedly declared on all occasions, contrary to express affirmations in the book he undertakes to confute, and the whole design of the book itself. I cannot easily declare my surprisal on this account. What am I to expect from others, when such reverend men as this author, shall by the power of prejudice be carried beyond all bounds of moderation, and Christian tenderness in offending? I no way doubt but that Satan hath his design in this whole business. He knows how apt we are to fix on such provocations, and to contribute thereupon to the increase of our differences. Can he, according to the course of things in the world, expect any other issue, but that in the necessary defensative I am put upon, I should not wave such reflections and retortions on him and them, with whom I have to do, as present themselves with as fair pleas and pretences unto me, as it is possible for me to judge, that the charges before mentioned (I mean of schism, heresy, and the like) did unto him. For as to a return of any thing in its own nature false and untrue, as to matter of fact, to meet with that of the like kind wherewith I am entertained, I suppose the devil himself was hopeless to obtain it. Is he not filled with envy to take notice in what love without dissimulation I walk with many of the presbyterian judgment? what Christian intercourse and communion I have with them in England, Scotland, Holland, France, fearing that it may tend to the furtherance of peace and union among the churches of Christ? God assisting I shall deceive his expectations, and though I be called schismatic and heretic a thousand times, it shall not weaken my love or esteem of or towards any of the godly ministers or people of that way and judgment with whom I am acquainted, or have occasion of converse.

And for this reverend author himself, I shall not fail to pray, that none of the things, whereby he hath, I fear, administered advantage unto Satan to attempt the exasperations of the spirits of brethren one against another, may ever be laid to his charge. For my own part I profess in all sincerity, that such was my unhappiness, or rather happiness in the constant converse which in sundry places I have with persons of the presbyterian judgment, both of the English and Scottish nation, utterly of another frame of

spirit, than that which is now shewed, that until I saw this treatise, I did not believe that there had remained in any one godly, sober, judicious person in England, such thoughts of heart in reference to our present differences, as are visible and legible therein:

Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?

I hope the reverend author will not be offended, if I make bold to tell him, that it will be no joy of heart to him one day, that he hath taken pains to cast oil on those flames, which it is every one's duty to labour to extinguish.

But that the whole matter in difference may be the better stated and determined, I shall first pass through with the general concernments of the book itself, and then consider the several chapters of it, as to any particulars in them that may seem to relate to the business in hand. It may possibly not a little conduce towards the removal of those obstructions unto peace and love, laid in our way by this reverend author, and to a clearer stating of the controversy pretended to be ventilated in his discourse, to discover and lay aside those mistakes of his, which being interwoven with the main discourse from the beginning to the end, seem as principles to animate the whole, and to give it that life of trouble, whereof it is partaker. Some of them were, as absolutely considered, remarked before; I shall now renew the mention of them, with respect to that influence which they have into the argumentative part of the treatise under consideration.

1. First, then, it is strenuously supposed all along, that I deny all, or any churches in England, to be true churches of Christ, except only the churches gathered in the congregational way, and upon their principles: then, that I deny all the reformed churches beyond the seas to be true churches of Christ. This supposition being laid, as the foundation of the whole building, a confutation of my treatise is fixed thereon, a comparison is instituted between the Donatists and myself: arguments are produced to prove their churches to be true churches, and their ministers true ministers. The charge of schism on this bottom is freely given out and asserted, the proof of my schismatical separation from hence *deduced*, and many terms of reproach are

returned as a suitable reply to the provocation of this opinion. How great a portion of a small treatise may easily be taken up with discourses relating to these heads, is easy to apprehend. Now lest all this pains should be found to be useless, and causelessly undergone, let us consider how the reverend author proves this to be my judgment. Doth he evince it from any thing delivered in that treatise he undertakes to confute? doth he produce any other testimonies out of what I have spoken, delivered, or written elsewhere, and on other occasions to make it good? This I suppose he thought not of, but took it for granted, that either I was of that judgment, or it was fit I should be so, that the difference between us might be as great, as he desired to have it appear to be.

Well, to put an end to this controversy, seeing he would not believe what I told the world of my thoughts herein in my book of schism, I now inform him again, that all these surmises are fond and untrue. And truly for his own sake with that respect which is due to the reputation of religion, I here humbly entreat him not to entertain what is here affirmed with unchristian surmises, which the apostle reckons amongst the works of the flesh, as though I were of another mind but durst not declare it, as more than once in some particulars he insinuates the state of things with me to be. But blessed be the God of my salvation, and of all my deliverances, I have yet liberty to declare the whole of my judgment in and about the things of his worship. Blessed be God, it is not as yet in the power of some men to bring in that their conceited happiness into England, which would in their thoughts accrue unto it, by my removal from my native soil, with all others of my judgment and persuasion. We are yet at peace, and we trust that the Lord will deliver us from the hands of men, whose tender mercies are cruel. However be it known unto them, that if it be the will of the Lord upon our manifold provocations to give us up to their disposal, who are pleased to compass us with the ornaments of reproaches before mentioned, that so we might fall as a sacrifice to rage or violence, we shall, through his assistance and presence with us, dare to profess the whole of that truth, and those ways of his, which he hath been pleased to reveal unto us.

And if on any other account this reverend person suppose I may foster opinions and thoughts of mine own and their ways which I dare not own, let him at any time give me a command to wait upon him, and as I will freely and candidly answer to any inquiries he shall be pleased to make after my judgment and apprehensions of these things, so he shall find that (God assisting) I dare own, and will be ready to maintain, what I shall so deliver to him. It is a sufficient evidence that this reverend author is an utter stranger to me, or he would scarce entertain such surmises of me as he doth. Shall I call in witnesses as to the particular under consideration? one evidence by way of instance lies so near at hand, that I cannot omit the producing of it: not above fourteen days before this treatise came to my hands, a learned gentleman, whom I had prevailed withal to answer in the vespers of our act, sent me his questions by a doctor of the presbyterian judgment, a friend of his, and mine. The first question was, as I remember, to this purpose: 'Ultrum ministri ecclesiæ Anglicanæ habeant validam ordinationem.' I told the doctor, that since the questions were to pass under my approbation, I must needs confess myself scrupled at the limitation of the subject of the question in that term 'ecclesia Anglicana,' which would be found ambiguous and equivocal in the disputation; and therefore desired that he would rather supply it with 'ecclesiarum reformatarum,' or some other expression of like importance; but as to the thing itself aimed at, namely, the assertion of the ministry of the godly ministers in England, I told him, and so now do the reverend author of this treatise, that I shall as willingly engage in the defence of it, with the lawfulness of their churches, as any man whatever. I have only in my treatise questioned the institution of a national church, which this author doth not undertake to maintain, nor hath the least reason so to do, for the asserting of true ministers and churches in England; I mean those of the presbyterian way. What satisfaction now this reverend author shall judge it necessary for him to give me, for the public injury which voluntarily he hath done me, in particular for his attempt to expose me to the censure and displeasure of so many godly ministers and churches as I own in England, as a person denying their ministry, *and church station*, I leave it to himself to consider.

And by the declaration of this mistake how great a part of his book is waved as to my concernments therein, himself full well knows.

2. A second principle of like importance which he is pleased to make use of, as a thing granted by me, or at least which he assumes, as that which ought so to be, is that whatever the presbyterian ministers and churches be, I have separated from them, as have done all those whom he calls Independents. This is another fountain, out of which much bitter water flows. Hence we must needs be thought to condemn their ministry and churches. The Brownists were our fathers, and the Anabaptists are our elder brothers, we make a harlot of our mother, and are schismatics and sectaries from one end of the book to the other. 'Quod erat demonstrandum.' But doth not this reverend author know that this is wholly denied by us? Is it not disproved sufficiently in that very treatise which he undertakes to answer?

He grants, I suppose, that the separation he blames, must respect some union of Christ's institution: for any other, we profess ourselves unconcerned in its maintenance, or dissolution, as to the business in hand. Now wherein have we separated from them as to the breach of any such union? For an individual person to change from the constant participation of ordinances in one congregation, to do so in another, barely considered in itself, this reverend author holds to be no separation. However for my part, who am forced to bear all this wrath and storm, what hath he to lay to my charge? I condemn not their churches in general, to be no churches, nor any one that I am acquainted withal in particular. I never disturbed, that I know of, the peace of any one of them, nor separated from them; but having already received my punishment, I expect to hear my crime by the next return.

3. He supposeth throughout that I deny not only the necessity of a successive ordination, but as far as I can understand him, the lawfulness of it also. By ordination of ministers, many upon a mistake understand only the imposition of hands that is used therein. Ordination of ministers is one thing, and imposition of hands another, differing as whole and part; ordination in Scripture compriseth the whole authoritative translation of a man from among the

number of his brethren into the state of an officer in the church. I suppose he doth not think that this is denied by me, though he tells me, with the same Christian candour and tenderness, which he exerciseth in every passage almost of his book, of making myself a minister, and I know not what. I am, I bless the Lord, extremely remote from returning him any of his own coin in satisfaction for this love. For that part of it which consists in the imposition of hands by the presbytery (where it may be obtained according to the mind of Christ), I am also very remote from managing any opposition unto it. I think it necessary by virtue of precept, and that to be continued in a way of succession. It is, I say, according to the mind of Christ, that he who is to be ordained unto office in any church, receive imposition of hands from the elders of that church, if there be any therein. And this is to be done in a way of succession, that so the churches may be perpetuated. That alone which I oppose is the denying of this successive ordination, through the authority of antichrist. Before the blessed and glorious reformation, begun and carried on by Zuinglius, Luther, Calvin, and others, there were, and had been two states of men in the world, professing the name of Christ and the gospel, as to the outward profession thereof. The one of them in glory, splendour, outward beauty, and order, calling themselves the church, the only church in the world, the catholic church; being indeed and in truth in that state wherein they so prided themselves, the mother of harlots, the beast, with his false prophet. The other party, poor, despised, persecuted, generally esteemed and called heretics, schismatics, or as occasion gave advantage for their farther reproach, Waldenses, Albigenses, Lollards, and the like. As to the claim of a successive ordination drawn from the apostles, I made bold to affirm, that I could not understand the validity of that successive ordination, as successive, which was derived down unto us, from and by the first party of men in the world.

This reverend author's reply hereunto, is like the rest of his discourse: p. 118. he tells me, 'This casts dirt in the face of their ministry, as do all their good friends the sectaries, and that he hath much ado to forbear saying, 'The Lord rebuke *thee.*' *How he doth* forbear it, having so expressed

the frame of his heart towards me, others will judge: the searcher of all hearts knows, that I had no design to cast dirt on him, or any other godly man's ministry in England. Might not another answer have been returned without this wrath?—This is so, or it is not so, in reference to the ministry of this nation. If it be not so, and they plead not their successive ordination from Rome, there is an end of this difference. If it be so, can Mr. C. hardly refrain from calling a man Satan, for speaking the truth? It is well if we know of what spirit we are.

But let us a little farther consider his answer in that place. He asketh first, 'Why may not this be a sufficient foundation for their ministry, as well as for their baptism?' If it be so, and be so acknowledged, whence is that great provocation that arose from my inquiry after it? For my part I must tell him, that I judge their baptism good and valid, but to deal clearly with him, not on that foundation. I cannot believe, that that idolater, murderer, man of sin, had since the days of his open idolatry, persecution, and enmity to Christ, any authority more or less from the Lord Jesus committed to him, in or over his churches. But he adds, secondly, 'That had they received their ordination from the woman flying into the wilderness, the two witnesses, or Waldenses, it had been all one to me, and my party; for they had not their ordination from the people (except some extraordinary cases), but from a presbytery, according to the institution of Christ.' So then, ordination by a presbytery is, it seems, opposed by me and my party; but I pray, sir, who told you so? when, wherein, by what means have I opposed it? I acknowledge myself of no party. I am sorry so grave a minister should suffer himself to be thus transported, that every answer, every reply, must be a reflection, and that without due observation of truth and love. That those first reformers had their ordination from the people, is acknowledged; I have formerly evinced it by undeniable testimony. So that the proper succession of a ministry amongst the churches that are their offspring, runs up no higher than that rise. Now the good Lord bless them in their ministry, and the successive ordination they enjoy, to bring forth more fruit in the earth to the praise of his glorious grace. *But upon my* disclaiming all thoughts of rejecting the mi-

nistry of all those, who yet hold their ordination on the account of its successive derivation from Rome, he cries out, 'egregiam vero laudem,' and says, 'that yet I secretly derive their pedigree from Rome.' Well then, he doth not so: why then, what need these exclamations? we are as to this matter wholly agreed; nor shall I at present farther pursue his discourse in that place: it is almost totally composed and made up of scornful revilings, reflections, and such other ingredients of the whole.

He frequently and very positively affirms, without the least hesitation, that I have 'renounced my own ordination,' and adds hereunto, that 'whatever else they pretend, unless they renounce their ordination, nothing will please me;' that 'I condemn all other churches in the world as no churches.' But who, I pray, told him these things? did he inquire so far after my mind in them, as without breach of charity to be able to make such positive and express assertions concerning them? A good part of his book is taken up in the repetition of such things as these, drawing inferences and conclusions from the suppositions of them, and warming himself by them into a great contempt of myself and party, as he calls them. I am now necessitated to tell him, that all these things are false, and utterly in part and in whole untrue, and that he is not able to prove any one of them. And whether this kind of dealing becomes a minister of the gospel, a person professing godliness, I leave it to himself to judge. For my own part I must confess, that as yet I was never so dealt withal by any man, of what party soever, although it hath been my unhappiness to provoke many of them. I do not doubt but that he will be both troubled and ashamed when he shall review these things. That whole chapter, which he entitles, Independentism, is Donatism; as to his application of it unto me, or any of my persuasion, is of the same importance, as I have sufficiently already evinced. I might instance in sundry other particulars, wherein he ventures without the least check or supposition, to charge me with what he pleaseth, that may serve the turn in hand; so that it may serve to bring in, 'he and his party are schismatics, are sectaries, have separated from the church of God, are the cause of all our evils and troubles,' with the like terms of reproach and

hard censures, lying in a fair subserviency to a design of widening the difference between us, and mutually exasperating the spirits of men professing the gospel of Jesus Christ, one against another, nothing almost comes amiss. His sticking upon by-matters, diverting from the main business in hand, answering arguments by reflections and the like, might also be remarked. One thing wherein he much rejoiceth, and fronts his book with the discovery he hath made of it, namely, concerning my change of judgment as to the difference under present debate, which is the substance and design of his appendix, must be particularly considered, and shall be, God assisting, in the next chapter accordingly.

CHAP. II.

An answer to the appendix of Mr. C.'s charge.

THOUGH perhaps impartial men will be willing to give me an acquitment from the charge of altering my judgment in the matters of our present difference, upon the general account of the co-partnership with me of the most inquiring men in this generation, as to things of no less importance; and though I might against this reverend brother, and others of the same mind and persuasion with him, at present relieve myself sufficiently by a recrimination, in reference to their former episcopal engagements, and sundry practices in the worship of God them attending, pleading in the mean time the general issue of changing from error to truth (which that I have done as to any change I have really made, I am ready at any time to maintain to this author), yet it being so much insisted upon by him as it is, and the charge thereof in the instance given, accompanied with so many evil surmisings, and uncharitable reflections, looking like the fruits of another principle than that whereby we ought in the management of our differences to be ruled, I shall give a more particular account of that, which hath yielded him this great advantage. The sole instance insisted on by him, is a small treatise published long ago by *me, entitled,* The Duty of Pastors and People distinguished;

wherein I profess myself to be of the presbyterian judgment. 'Excerpta' out of that treatise, with animadversions and comparisons thereon, make up the appendix, which was judged necessary to be added to the book, to help on with the proof that independency is a great schism: had it not been indeed needful to cause the person to suffer, as well as the thing, some suppose this pains might have been spared. But I am not to prescribe to any, what way it is meet for them to proceed in, for the compassing of their ends aimed at. The best is, here is no new thing produced, but what the world hath long since taken notice of, and made of it the worst they can. Neither am I troubled that I have a necessity laid upon me to give an account of this whole matter. That little treatise was written by me in the year 1643, and then printed; however, it received the addition of a year in the date affixed to it by the printers, which for their own advantage is a thing usual with them. I was then a young man myself, about the age of twenty-six or twenty-seven years. The controversy between independency and presbytery was young also; nor indeed by me clearly understood, especially as stated on the congregational side. The conceptions delivered in the treatise were not (as appears in the issue) suited to the opinion of the one party, nor of the other; but were such as occurred to mine own naked consideration of things, with relation to some differences that were then upheld in the place where I lived, only being unacquainted with the congregational way, I professed myself to own the other party, not knowing but that my principles were suited to their judgment and profession; having looked very little farther into those affairs, than I was led by an opposition to episcopacy and ceremonies. Upon a review of what I had there asserted, I found that my principles were far more suited to what is the judgment and practice of the congregational men, than those of the presbyterian. Only whereas I had not received any further clear information in these ways of the worship of God, which since I have been engaged in, as was said, I professed myself of the presbyterian judgment, in opposition to democratical confusion; and indeed so I do still; and so do all the congregational men in England, that I am acquainted *withal; so that when I* compare what then I wrote,

with my present judgment, I am scarce able to find the least difference between the one and the other; only a misapplication of names and things by me gives countenance to this charge. Indeed not long after, I set myself seriously to inquire into the controversies then warmly agitated in these nations. Of the congregational way, I was not acquainted with any one person, minister or other; nor had I, to my knowledge, seen any more than one in my life. My acquaintance lay wholly with ministers, and people of the presbyterian way. But sundry books being published on either side, I perused, and compared them with the Scripture, and one another, according as I received ability from God. After a general view of them, as was my manner in other controversies, I fixed on one to take under peculiar consideration and examination, which seemed most methodically and strongly to maintain that which was contrary as I thought to my present persuasion. This was Mr. Cotton's book of the Keys. The examination and confutation hereof, merely for my own particular satisfaction, with what diligence and sincerity I was able, I engaged in. What progress I made in that undertaking, I can manifest unto any by the discourses on that subject, and animadversions on that book yet abiding by me. In the pursuit and management of this work, quite besides, and contrary to my expectation, at a time and season wherein I could expect nothing on that account but ruin in this world, without the knowledge or advice of, or conference with, any one person of that judgment, I was prevailed on to receive that, and those principles which I had thought to have set myself in an opposition unto. And indeed this way of impartial examining all things by the word, comparing causes with causes, and things with things, laying aside all prejudicate respects unto persons, or present traditions, is a course that I would admonish all to beware of, who would avoid the danger of being made independents. I cannot indeed deny, but that it is possible I was advantaged in the disquisition of the truth I had in hand, from my former embracing of the principles laid down in the treatise insisted on; now being by this means settled in the truth, which I am ready to maintain to this reverend and learned author, if he or any *other* suppose they have any advantage hereby against me

s to my reputation, which alone is sought in such attempts s this: or if I am blameably liable to the charge of inconstancy and inconsistency with my own principles, which he bought meet to front his book withal, hereupon I shall not labour to divest him of his apprehension, having abundant cause to rejoice in the rich grace of a merciful and tender father, that men seeking occasion to speak evil of so poor a worm, tossed up and down in the midst of innumerable temptations, I should be found to fix on that which I know will be found my rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

I am necessitated to add somewhat also to a surmise of this reverend man, in reference to my episcopal compliances s former days, and strict observation of their canons. This indeed I should not have taken notice of, but that I find others, besides this author, pleasing themselves with this apprehension, and endeavouring an advantage against the truth I profess thereby. How little some of my adversaries are like to gain, by branding this as a crime, is known; and I profess I know not the conscience, that is exercised in this matter. But to deliver them once for all from involving themselves in the like unchristian procedure hereafter, let them now know what they might easily have known before; namely, that this accusation is false, a plain calumny, a lie. As I was bred up from my infancy under the care of my father, who was a nonconformist all his days, and a painful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord; so ever since I came to have any distinct knowledge of the things belonging to the worship of God, I have been fixed in judgment against that which I am calumniated withal; which is notoriously known to all that have had any acquaintance with me: what advantage this kind of proceeding is like to bring to his own soul, or the cause which he manageth, I leave to himself to judge.

Thus in general, to take a view of some particular passages in the appendix destined to this good work; the last section tries with much wit and rhetoric to improve the pretended alteration of judgment to the blemishing of my reputation, affirming it to be from truth to error; which, as to my particular, so far as it shall appear I am concerned (I am little moved with the bare affirmation of men, especially I *induced to it by their interest*), I desire him to let me

know when and where I may personally wait upon him to be convinced of it: in the mean time, so much for that section: in the second, he declares what my judgment was in that treatise about the distance between pastors and people, and of the extremes that some men on each hand run into; and I now tell him, that I am of the same mind still, so that that note hath little availed him. In the third, he relates what I delivered, 'that a man, not solemnly called to the office of the ministry by any outward call, might do as to the preaching of the gospel in a collapsed church-state:' unto this he makes sundry objections, that my discourse is dark, not clear, and the like; but, remembering that his business was not to confute that treatise also, but to prove from it my inconstancy, and inconsistency with myself, he says, I am changed from what I then delivered: this is denied, I am punctually of the same judgment still: but he proves the contrary by a double argument. 1. Because I have renounced my ordination. 2. Because I think now, that not only in a complete church-state, but when no such thing can be charged, that gifts and consent of the people is enough to make a man a preacher in office: both untrue and false in fact. I profess I am astonished, to think with what frame of spirit, what neglect of all rules of truth and love this business is managed. In the fourth section, he chargeth me to have delivered somewhat in that treatise about the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost in believers, and my words to that purpose are quoted at large. What then? am I changed in this also? no, but that is an error in the judgment of all that be orthodox: but that is not the business in hand, but the alteration of my judgment; wherefore he makes a kind of exposition upon my words in that treatise, to shew that I was not then of the mind that I have now delivered myself to be of, in my book of schism; but I could easily answer the weakness of his exceptions, and pretended expositions of my former assertions, and evidence my consistency in judgment with myself in this business ever since; but this he saith is an error which he gathered out of my book of schism; and somebody hath sent him word from Oxford that I preached the same doctrine at St. Mary's. I wish his informer had never more deceived him; it is most *true* I have done so, and since printed at large what then I

delivered, with sundry additions thereunto; and if this reverend author shall think good to examine what I have published on that account (not in the way in this treatise proceeded in, which in due time will be abhorred of himself and all good men, but with candour, and a spirit of Christian ingenuity and meekness), I shall acknowledge myself obliged to him: and in the mean time I desire him to be cautious of large expressions, concerning all the orthodox, to oppose that opinion, seeing evidences of the contrary lie at hand in great plenty: and let him learn from hence how little his insulting in his book on this account is to be valued. Sect. 5. he shews that I then proved the name of priests not to be proper, or to be ascribed to the ministers of the gospel; but that now (as is supposed in scorn) I call the ministers of their particular congregations parochial priests: untrue! In the description of the prelatical church, I shewed what they esteemed and called parish ministers amongst them. I never called the presbyterian ministers of particular congregations, parochial priests. Love, truth, and peace; these things ought not thus to be. Sect. 6. he labours to find some difference in the tendency of several expressions in that treatise, which is not at all to the purpose in hand, nor true, as will appear to any that shall read the treatise itself. In sect. 7—11. he takes here and there a sentence out of the treatise and examines it, interlacing his discourse with untrue reflections, surmises, and prognostications: and in particular, p. 238, 239. But what doth all this avail him in reference to his design in hand? not only before, but even since, his exceptions to the things then delivered, I am of the same mind that I was, without the least alteration. And in the viewing of what I had then asserted, I find nothing strange to me, but the sad discovery of what frame of spirit the charge proceeded from. Sect. 12. doth the whole work; there I acknowledge myself to be of the presbyterian judgment, and not of the independent or congregational. Had this reverend author thought meet to have confined his charge to this one quotation, he had prevented much evil that spreads itself over the rest of his discourse, and yet have attained the utmost of what he can hope for from the whole; and hereof I have already given an account. But he will yet proceed, and,

sect. 13. inform his reader, that in that treatise I aver, two things are required in a teacher, as to formal minist teaching. 1. Gifts from God. 2. Authority from church: well! what then? I am of the same mind still: now I cry down ordination by presbytery; what, and is this a great alteration and sign of inconstancy? Truly there is more need of humiliation in yourself, than trium ing against me; for the assertion is most untrue, and charge altogether groundless; which I desire you wou satisfied in, and not to be led any more by evil surmise wrong me, and your own soul. He adds, sect. 14. two tions, which in that treatise I give to private Christia the exercise of their gifts, and closeth the last of them a juvenile epiphonema, divinely spoken, and like a true byterian: and yet there is not one word in either of cautions that I do not still own and allow; which con the unhappiness of the charge. Of all that is substant any thing that follows, I affirm the same, as to all that w is gone before. Only as to the liberty to be allowed them which meet in private, who cannot in conscience in the celebration of public ordinances, as they are formed amongst us, I confess myself to be otherwise mi at present, than the words there quoted by this auth express. But this is nothing to the difference between bytery and independency: and he that can glory, th fourteen years he hath not altered or improved in his ception of some things, of no greater importance than mentioned, shall not have me for his rival. And this i sum of Mr. C.'s appendix; the discourse whereof being ried on with such a temper of spirit as it is, and suit the advantage aimed at, by so many evil surmises, false gestions, and uncharitable reflections, I am persuade taking of that pains, will one day be no joy of heart him.

CHAP. III.

A review of the charger's preface.

first chapter consists for the most part in a repetition
ly words, or so much of the discourse of my first chapter
e could wrest, by cutting off one, and another parcel of
om its coherence in the whole, with the interposure of
ses of his own, to serve him to make biting reflections
n them with whom he hath to deal. How unbecoming
a course of procedure is, for a person of his worth, gra-
, and profession, [perhaps his δευτέραι φροντίδες, have
his time convinced him. If men have a mind to perpe-
e controversies unto an endless, fruitless reciprocation
ords and cavils; if to provoke to easy and facile retor-
s; if to heighten and aggravate differences beyond any
s of reconciliation, they may do well to deal after this
ner with the writings of one another. Mr. C. knows
easy it were to make his own words dress him up in all
e ornaments wherein he labours to make me appear in the
ld, by such glosses, inversions, additions, and interposi-
s, as he is pleased to make use of; but 'meliora spera-
.' Such particulars that seem to be of any importance
ur business in hand, may be remarked as we pass through
p. 1. he tells us the Donatists had two principles. 1.
t they were the only church of Christ in a corner of Af-
, and left no church in the world but their own. 2. That
e were truly baptized, or entered members of the church of
ist, but by some minister of their party.' These principles,
ays, are again improved by men of another party: whom
gh yet he name not, yet it is evident whom he intends;
p. 3. he requires my judgment of those principles.
Because I would not willingly be wanting in any thing
may tend to his satisfaction, though I have some reason
onjecture at my unhappiness in respect of the event; I
l with all integrity give him my thoughts of the princi-
s expressed above.

1. Then, if they were considered in reference to the Do-
sts who owned them, I say, they were wicked, corrupt,
neous principles, tending to the disturbance of the com-

munion of saints, and everting all the rules of love that our Lord Jesus Christ hath given to his disciples and servants to observe; if he intend my judgment of them in reference to the churches of England, which he calls independent, I am sorry that he should think he hath any reason to make this inquiry. I know not that man in the world who is less concerned in obtaining countenance to those principles than I am. Let them who are so ready on all occasions, or provocations, to cast abroad the solemn forms of reproach, schismatics, sectaries, heretics, and the like, search their own hearts as to a conformity of spirit unto these principles. It is not what men say, but what men do, that they shall be judged by. As the Donatists were not the first who in story were charged with schism, no more was their schism confined to Africa. The agreement of multitudes in any principles, makes it in itself not one whit better, and in effect worse. For my part, I acknowledge the churches in England, Scotland, and France, Helvetia, the Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Muscovia, &c. as far as I know of them, to be true churches; such, for aught I know, may be in Italy or Spain; and what pretence or colour this reverend person hath to fix a contrary persuasion upon me, with so many odious imputations and reflections, of being one of the restorers of all lost churches, and the like, I profess I know not. These things will not be peace in the latter end; shall the sword devour for ever? I dare not suppose that he will ask, why then do I separate from them? he hath read my book of schism, wherein I have undeniably proved, that I have separated from none of them, and I am loath to say, though I fear before the close of my discourse I shall be compelled to it, that this reverend author hath answered a matter before he understood it, and confuted a book, whose main and chief design he did not once apprehend. The rest of this chapter is composed of reflections upon me from my own words wrested at his pleasure, and added to according to the purpose in hand, and the taking for granted unto that end that they are in the right, we in the wrong, that their churches are true churches, and yet not esteemed so by me, that we have separated from those churches, with such like easy suppositions. He is troubled that I thought the mutual chargings of each other with schism, *between* the Presbyterians and Independents, was as to its

heat abated and ready to vanish: wherein he hath invincibly compelled me to acknowledge my mistake; and I assure him I am heartily sorry that I was mistaken, it will not be somebody's joy one day that I was so. He seems to be offended with my notion of schism, because if it be true, it will carry it almost out of the world, and bless the churches with everlasting peace. He tells me, that a learned doctor said 'my book was one great schism;' I hope that is but one doctor's opinion; because, being nonsense, it is not fit it should be entertained by many. In the process of his discourse, he calls out sundry passages, delivered by me in reference to the great divisions and differences that are in the world among men professing the name of Christ, and applies them to the difference between the Presbyterians and Independents, with many notable lashes in his way; when they were very little in my thoughts, nor are the things spoken by me in any tolerable measure applicable to them. I suppose no rational man will expect that I should follow our reverend author in such ways and paths as these; it were easy in so doing to enter into an endless maze of words, to little purpose, and I have no mind to deal with him as he hath done by me, I like not the copy so well as to write by it; so his first chapter is discussed, and forgiven.

CHAP. IV.

Of the nature of schism.

The second chapter of my book, whose examination this author undertakes in the second of his, containing the foundation of many inferences that ensue, and in particular of that description of schism which he intends to oppose, it might have been expected, that he should not have culled out passages at his pleasure to descant upon, but either have transcribed the whole, or at least under one view have laid down clearly what I proposed to confirmation, that the state of the controversy being rightly formed, all might understand what we say, and whereof we do affirm: but he thought better of another way *of procedure, which* I am now bound to allow him

in; the reason whereof he knows, and other men may conjecture.

The first words he fixes on are the first of the chapter, 'The thing whereof we treat being a disorder in the instituted worship of God;' whereunto he replies, 'It is an ill sign or omen, to stumble at the threshold in going out; these words are ambiguous, and may have a double sense, either that schism is to be found in matter of instituted worship only, or only in the differences made in the time of celebrating instituted worship; and neither of these is yet true, or yet proved, and so a mere begging of the thing in question: for,' saith he, 'schism may be in, and about, other matter besides instituted worship.'

What measure I am to expect for the future from this entrance or beginning, is not hard to conjecture. The truth is, the reverend author understood me not at all, in what I affirmed: I say not, that schism in the church is either about instituted worship, or only in the time of worship, but that the thing I treat of, is a disorder in the instituted worship of God, and so it is, if the being and constitution of any church be a part of God's worship; but when men are given to disputing, they think it incumbent on them to question every word and expression, that may possible give them an advantage: but we must, now we are engaged, take all in good part as it comes. Having nextly granted my request of standing to the sole determination of Scripture, in the controversy about the nature of schism, he insists on the Scripture use and notion of the word, according to what I had proposed; only in the metaphorical sense of the word, as applied unto civil and political bodies, he endeavours to make it appear, that it doth not only denote the difference and division that falls among them in judgment, but their secession also into parties; which though he proves not from any of the instances produced, yet because he may not trouble himself any farther in the like kind of needless labour, I do here inform him, that if he suppose that I deny that to be a schism, where there is a separation, and that because there is a separation, as though schism were in its whole nature exclusive of all separation, and lost its being when separation ensued, he hath taken my mind as rightly, as he has done the whole *design of my book*, and my sense in his first animadversions

on this chapter. But yet, because this is not proved, I shall desire him not to make use of it for the future as though it were so. The first place urged, is that of John vii. 43. 'There was a schism among the people:' it is not pretended that here was any separation: Acts xiv. 4. 'the multitude of the city was divided,' that is, in their judgment about the apostles and their doctrine; but not only so, for οἱ μὲν ἦσαν, is spoken of them, which expresses their separation into parties: what weight this new criticism is like to find with others, I know not; for my part, I know the words enforce not the thing aimed at, and the utmost that seems to be intended by that expression, is the siding of the multitude, some with one, some with another, whilst they were all in a public commotion, nor doth the context require any more. The same is the case, Acts, xxiii. 7. where the Sadducees and Pharisees were divided about Paul, whilst abiding in the place where the sanhedrim sat, being divided into parties long before; and in the testimony cited in my margent for the use of the word in other authors, the author makes even that διεμερίσθησαν εἰς τὰ μέρη, to stand in opposition, only to ὡμονόησαν, nor was it any more. There was not among the people of Rome such a separation as to break up the corporation, or to divide the government, as is known from the story. The place of his own producing, Acts xix. 9. proves indeed that then and there, there was a separation, but as the author confesses in the margent, the word there used to express it hath no relation to σχίσμα. Applied to ecclesiastical things, the reverend author confesses with me, that the word is only used in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xi. 18, 19. and therefore, that from thence the proper use and importance of it is to be learned. Having laid down the use of the word to denote difference of mind and judgment, with troubles ensuing thereupon, amongst men met in some one assembly about the compassing of a common end and design, I proceed to the particular accommodation of it, to church-rents and schism in that solitary instance given of it in the church of Corinth. What says our author hereunto? Says he, p. 26. 'This is a forestalling the reader's judgment, by a mere begging of the thing in question: as it hath in part been proved from the Scripture itself, where it is used for separation into parties, *in the political use of* the word, why it may not so be

used in the ecclesiastical sense, I see no reason.' But if this be the way of begging the question, I confess I know not what course to take to prove what I intend. Such words are used sometimes in warm disputes causelessly; it were well they were placed where there is some pretence for them; certainly they will not serve every turn. Before I asserted the use of the word, I instanced in all the places where it is used, and evinced the sense of it from them: if this be begging, it is not that lazy trade of begging which some use; but such as a man had as good professedly work as follow. How well he hath disproved this sense of the word from Scripture, we have seen; I am not concerned in his seeing no reason why it may not be used in the ecclesiastical sense, according to his conception, my inquiry was how it was used, not how it might be used in this reverend author's judgment. And this is the substance of all that is offered to overthrow that principle, which if it abide and stand, he must needs confess all his following pains to be to no purpose. He sees no reason but it may be as he says.

After the declaration of some such suspicions of his, as we are now wonted unto, and which we cannot deny him the liberty of expressing, though I profess he do it unto my injury, he says, 'this is the way on the one hand to free all church-separation from schism, and on the other to make all particular churches more or less inschismatical;' well, the first is denied; what is offered for the confirmation of the second? saith he, 'what one congregation almost is there in the world, where there are not differences of judgment, whence ensue many troubles about the compassing of one common end and design. I doubt whether his own be free therefore.' If any testimony may remove his scruple, I assure him, through the grace of God, hitherto it hath been so, and I hope it is so with multitudes of other churches; those with whom it is otherwise, it will appear at last to be more or less blameable on the account of schism.

Omitting my farther explication of what I had proposed, he passes unto p. 27. of my book, and thence transcribes these words: 'they had differences among themselves about unnecessary things, on these they engaged into disputes and sidings even in the solemn assemblies, probably much *vain janglings*, alienation of affections, exasperations of

spirit, with a neglect of due offices of love ensued hereupon;' whereunto he subjoins, 'that the apostle charges this upon them is true, but was that all? were there not divisions into parties as well as in judgments? we shall consider that ere long.' But I am sorry he hath waved this proper place of the consideration of this important assertion; the truth is, 'hic pes figendus,' if he remove not this position, he labours in vain for the future. I desire also to know what he intends by divisions into parties; if he intend that some were of one party, some of another, in these divisions and differences, it is granted; there can be no difference in judgment amongst men, but they must on that account be divided into parties; but if he intend thereby, that they divided into several churches, assemblies, or congregations, any of them setting up new churches on a new account, or separating from the public assemblies of the church whereof they were, and that their so doing is reproved by the apostle under the name of schism, then I tell him that this is that indeed whose proof is incumbent on him. Fail he herein, the whole foundation of my discourse continues firm and unshaken; the truth is, I cannot meet with any one attempt to prove this, which alone was to be proved, if he intended that I should be any farther concerned in his discourse, than only to find myself reviled and abused.

Passing over what I produce to give light and evidence unto my assertion, he proceeds to the consideration of the observations and inferences I make upon it, p. 29. and onward.

The first he insists upon is, that the thing mentioned is entirely in one church, amongst the members of one particular society; no mention is made of one church divided against another, or separated from another.

To this he replies, 1. 'That the church of Corinth, was a collective church, made up of many congregations, and that I myself confess they had solemn assemblies, not one assembly only; that I beg the question by taking it for one single congregation.' But I suppose one particular congregation may have more than one solemn assembly, even as many, as are the times, wherein they solemnly assemble.

2. I supposed I had proved that it was only one congregation, *that used to* assemble in one place, that the apo-

stle charged this crime upon, and that this reverend author was pleased to overlook what was produced to that purpose, I am not to be blamed. 3. Here is another discovery, that this reverend person never yet clearly understood the design of my treatise, nor the principles I proceed upon. Doth he think it is any thing to my present business, whether the church of Corinth were such a church as Presbyterians suppose it to be, or such a one as the Independents affirm it? whilst all acknowledge it to be one church, be that particular church of what kind it will, if the schism rebuked by the apostle consisted in division in it, and not in separation from it, as such, I have evinced all that I intended by the observation under consideration. Yet this he again pursues, and tells me, 'that there were more particular churches in and about Corinth, as that at Cenchrea, and that their differences were not confined to the verge of one church (for there were differences abroad out of the church), and says, that at unawares I confess that they disputed from house to house, and in the public assemblies;' but I will assure the reverend author I was aware of what I said. Is it possible he should suppose that by the verge of one church I intended the meeting place, and the assembly therein? was it at all incumbent on me to prove that they did not manage their differences in private, as well as in public? is it likely any such thing should be? did I deny that they sided and made parties about their divisions and differences? is it any thing to me, or to any thing I affirm, how, where, and when, they managed their disputes, and debated their controversies? it is true there is mention of a church at Cenchrea, but is there any mention that that church made any separation from the church of Corinth? or that the differences mentioned were between the members of these several churches? is it any thing to my present design, though there were twenty particular congregations in Corinth, supposing that on any consideration they were one church? I assure you, sir, I am more troubled with your not understanding the business and design I manage, than I am with all your reviling terms you have laden me withal.

Once for all, unless you prove that there was a separation *from* that church of Corinth (be it of what constitution

it may by any be supposed) as such, into another church, and that this is reproved by the apostle under the name of schism, you speak not one word to invalidate the principle by me laid down; and for what he adds, 'that for what I say there was no one church divided against another, or separated from another, is assumed, but not proved, unless by a negative, which is invalid;' he wrests my words. I say not there was no such thing, but that there was no mention of any such thing; for though it be as clear as the noonday, that indeed there was no such thing, it suffiœth my purpose that there was no mention of any such thing, and therefore no such thing reproved under the name of schism. With this one observation, I might well dismiss the whole ensuing treatise, seeing of how little use it is like to prove, as to the business in hand, when the author of it indeed apprehends not the principle which he pretends to oppose. I shall once more tell him, that he abide not in his mistake, that if he intend to evert the principle here by me insisted on, it must be by a demonstration that the schism charged on the Corinthians by Paul consisted in the separation from, and relinquishment of, that church whereof they were members, and congregating into another not before erected or established; for this is that which the reformed churches are charged to do by the Romanists, in respect of their churches, and accused of schism thereupon. But the differences which he thinks good to manage and maintain, with, and against the Independents, do so possess the thoughts of this reverend author, that whatever occurs to him, is immediately measured by the regard which it seems to bear, or may possibly bear thereunto, though that consideration were least of all regarded in its proposal.

The next observation upon the former thesis that he takes into his examination, so far as he is pleased to transcribe it, is this: 'Here is no mention of any particular man or number of men separating from the assembly of the whole church, or subducting of themselves from its power; only they had groundless causeless differences amongst themselves.' Hereunto our author variously replies, and says, 1. 'Was this all? were not separations made, if not from that church, yet in that church as well as divisions? Let the Scripture *determine*;' chap. i. 11. v. 3. 'I am a dis-

ciple of Paul said one, and I a disciple of Apollos said another, in our language: I am a member of such a minister's congregation, says one, such a man for my money, and so a third; and hereupon they most probably separated themselves into such and such congregations, and is not separation the ordinary issue of such envyings?'

I doubt not but that our reverend author supposeth that he hath here spoken to the purpose, and matter in hand; and so perhaps may some others think also. I must crave leave to enter my dissent upon the account of the ensuing reasons; for, 1. It is not separation in the church by men's divisions and differences whilst they continue members of the same church, that I deny to be here charged under the name of schism, but such a separation from the church, as was before described. 2. The disputes amongst them about Paul and Apollos, the instruments of their conversion cannot possibly be supposed to relate unto ministers of distinct congregations among them. Paul and Apollos were not so, and could not be figures of them that were, so that those expressions do not at all answer those which he is pleased to make parallel unto them. 3. Grant all this, yet this proves nothing to the cause in hand; men may cry up some the minister of one congregation, some of another, and yet neither of them separate from the one, or other, or the congregations themselves fall into any separation; wherefore, 4. he says, 'probably they separated into such and such congregations.' But this is most improbable; for first, there is no mention at all of those many congregations that are supposed, but rather the contrary, as I have declared, is expressly asserted. 2. There is no such thing mentioned or intimated, nor, 3. Are they in the least rebuked for any such thing, though the forementioned differences, which are a less evil, are reproved again and again, under the name of schism; so that this most improbable improbability, or rather vain conjecture, is a very mean refuge and retreat from the evidence of express Scripture, which in this place is alone inquired after. Doth indeed the reverend author think, will he pretend so to do, that the holy apostle should so expressly, weightily, and earnestly, reprove their dissensions in the church, whereof they were members, and yet not speak one word, or give the least in-

ation of their separation from the church; had there eed been any such thing? I dare leave this to the conence of the most partially-addicted person under heaven, the author's cause, who hath any conscience at all; nor e I dwell longer on the confutation of this fiction, ough it be upon the matter the whole of what I am to ntend withal. But he farther informs us, that 'there was eparation to parties in the church of Corinth, at least as one ordinance of the Lord's supper, as appears, chap. xi. 21—23. and this was part of their schism; ver. 16. d not long after they separated into other churches, ghting and undervaluing the first ministers and churches nothing or less pure than their own, which we see praced sufficiently at this day.' *Ans.* Were not this the head d seat of the first part of the controversy insisted on, I ould not be able to prevail with myself to cast away ecious time in the consideration of such things as these, ing tendered as suitable to the business in hand. It is knowledged that there were differences amongst them, d disorders in the administration of the Lord's supper; at therein they used 'respect of persons,' as the place oted in the margin by our author, James ii. 1—3. manists that they were ready to do in other places. The disder the apostle blames in the administration of the ordiances was, when they 'came together in the church,' ver. 18. hen they 'came together in one place,' ver. 20. there they rried 'not one for another' as they ought, ver. 33. but oming unprepared, some having eaten before, some being ngry, ver. 21. all things were managed with great conusion amongst them, ver. 22; and if this prove not, that the chism they were charged withal consisted in a separation om that church with which they came together in one lace, we are hopeless of any farther evidence to be tenered to that purpose. That there were disorders amongst hem in the celebration of the Lord's supper is certain; hat they separated into several congregations on that acount, or one from another, or any from all, is not in the east intimation signified; but the plain contrary shines in he whole state of things, as there represented. Had that een done, and had so to do been such an evil as is pleaded (as causelessly to do it is no small evil), it had not passed

unreproved from him, who was resolved in the things of God not to spare them. 2. That they afterward fell into the separation aimed at to be asserted, our reverend author affirms, that so he may make way for a reflection on the things of his present disquietment. But as we are not as yet concerning ourselves in what they did afterward, so when we are, we shall expect somewhat more than bare affirmations for the proof of it; being more than ordinarily confident, that he is not able from the Scripture, or any other story of credit, to give the least countenance to what he here affirms. But now as if the matter were well discharged, when there hath not one word been spoken, that in the least reaches the case in hand; he saith, 3. 'By way of supposition that there was but one single congregation at Corinth, yet,' said he, 'the apostle dehorts the brethren from schism, and writes to more than the church of Corinth,' chap. i. 2. *Ans.* I have told him before, that though I am full well resolved that there was but one single congregation at Corinth in those days, yet I am not at all convinced as to the proposition under confirmation to assert any such thing, but will suppose the church to be of what kind my author pleaseth, whilst he will acknowledge it to be the particular church of Corinth. I confess the apostle dehorts the brethren from schism, even others as well as those at Corinth, so far as the church of God, in all places and ages, are concerned in his instructions and dehortations, when they fall under the case stated, parallel with that which is the ground of his dealing with them at Corinth; but what that schism was from which he dehorts them, he declares only in the instance of the church of Corinth; and thence is the measure of it to be taken, in reference to all dehorted from it. Unto the third observation added by me, he makes no return, but only lays down some exceptions to the exemplification given of the whole matter, in another schism that fell out in that church about forty years after the composure of this, which was the occasion of that excellent epistle unto them from the church of Rome, called the epistle of Clement; dissuading them from persisting in that strife and contention, and pressing them to unity and agreement among themselves. Some things our reverend author offers as to this instance, but so, as that I cannot but sup-

pose, that he consulted not the epistle on this particular occasion; and therefore now I desire him that he would do so, and I am persuaded he will not a second time give countenance to any such apprehension of the then state of the church, as though there were any separation made from it by any of the members thereof, doing or suffering the injury there complained of, about which those differences and contentions arose. I shall not need to go over again the severals of that epistle; one word mentioned by myself, namely, *μεταγάγετε*, he insists on, and informs us, that it implies a separation into other assemblies; which he says, I waved to understand. I confess I did so in this place, and so would he also, if he had once consulted it. The speech of the church of Rome is there to the church of Corinth, in reference to the elders whom they had deposed. The whole sentence is, *ὁρῶμεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐνίους ὑμεῖς μεταγάγετε καλῶς πολιτευομένους ἐκ τῆς ἀμέμπτως αὐτοῖς τετιμημένης λειτουργιάς*· and the words immediately going before are, *μακάριοι οἱ προσδοκηθέντες πρεσβύτεροι οἵτινες ἔγκαρπον καὶ τελείαν ἴσχον τὴν ἀνάλυσιν, οὐ γὰρ εὐλαβοῦνται μή τίς αὐτοὺς μεταστήσῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱδρομένου αὐτοῖς τόπου*: then follows that *ὁρῶμεν δέ*. Our author, I suppose, understands Greek, and so I shall spare my pains of transcribing Mr. Young's Latin translation, or adding one in English of mine own; and if he be pleased to read these words, I think we shall have no more of his *μεταγάγετε*.

If a fair opportunity call me forth to the farther management of this controversy, I shall not doubt but from that epistle, and some other pieces of undoubted antiquity, as the epistle of the church of Vienna and Lyons, of Smyrna, with some public records of those days, as yet preserved, worthy all of them to be written in letters of gold, to evince that state of the churches of Christ in those days, as will give abundant light to the principles I proceed upon in this whole business.

And thus have I briefly vindicated what was proposed as the precise Scripture notion of schism, against which indeed not any one objection hath been raised, that speaks directly to the thing in hand. Our reverend author being full of warm affections against the Independents, and exercised greatly in disputing the common principles which either

they hold, or are supposed so to do; measures every thing that is spoken by his apprehension of those differences, wherein as he thinks their concernment doth lie: had it not been for some such prejudice (for I am unwilling to ascribe it to more blameable principles), it would have been almost impossible that he should have once imagined that he had made the least attempt towards the eversion of what I had asserted; much less that he had made good the title of his book, though he scarce forgets it, or any thing concerning it but its proof, in any one whole leaf of his treatise. It remains then that the nature and notion of schism, as revealed and described in the Scripture, was rightly fixed in my former discourse; and I must assure this reverend author, that I am not affrighted from the embracing and maintaining of it, with those scarecrows of new light, singularity, and the like, which he is pleased frequently to set up to that purpose. The discourse that ensues in our author concerning a parity of reason, to prove that if that be schism, then much more is separation so, shall afterward, if need be, be considered, when I proceed to shew what yet farther may be granted without the least prejudice of truth, though none can necessitate me to recede from the precise notion of the name and thing delivered in the Scripture. I confess I cannot but marvel, that any man undertaking the examination of that treatise, and expressing so much indignation at the thoughts of my discourse that lieth in this business, should so slightly pass over that, whereon he knew that I laid the great weight of the whole. Hath he so much as endeavoured to prove, that that place to the Corinthians is not the only place wherein there is in the Scripture any mention of schism in an ecclesiastical sense; or that the church of Corinth was not a particular church. Is any thing of importance offered to impair the assertion, that the evil reproved was within the verge of that church, and without separation from it? and do I need any more to make good to the utmost that which I have asserted: but of these things afterward.

In all that follows to the end of this chapter, I meet with nothing of importance that deserves farther notice: that which is spoken is for the most part built upon mistakes; as that when I speak of a member or the members of one par-

ticular church, I intend only one single congregation, exclusively to any other acceptation of that expression, in reference to the apprehension of others: that I deny the reformed churches to be true churches, because I deny the church of Rome to be so; and deny the institution of a national church, which yet our author pleads not for. He would have it for granted that because schism consists in a difference among church-members, therefore he that raises such a difference, whether he be a member of that church wherein the difference is raised, or of any other or no (suppose he be a Mahometan or a Jew), is a schismatic: pleads for the old definition of schism, as suitable to the Scripture, after the whole foundation of it is taken away: wrests many of my expressions; as that in particular, in not making the matter of schism to be things relating to the worship of God, to needless discourses about doctrine and discipline, not apprehending what I intended by that expression of the worship of God: and I suppose it not advisable to follow him in such extravagancies. The usual aggravations of schism he thought good to reinforce, whether he hoped that I would dispute with him about them I cannot tell. I shall now assure him that I will not, though if I may have his good leave to say so, I lay much more weight on those insisted on by myself, wherein I am encouraged by his approbation of them.

CHAP. V.

The third chapter of my Treatise consisting in the preventing and removing such objections as the precedent discourse might seem liable and obnoxious unto, is proposed to examination, by our reverend author, in the third chapter of his book; and the objections mentioned undertaken to be managed by him; with what success, some few considerations will evince.

The first objection by me proposed, was taken from the common apprehension of the nature of schism, and the issue of stating it as by me laid down; namely, hence it would

follow that the 'separation of any man or men from a t church, or of one church from others, is not schism.' I now waving for the present the more large consideration the name and thing, which yet in the process of my d course I do condescend upon, according to the principle l down; I say that in the precise signification of the wo and description of the thing as given by the Holy Ghost, t is true: no such separation is in the Scripture so called, so accounted; whether it may not in a large sense be estee as such, I do not dispute, yea, I afterward grant it so far, to make that concession the bottom and foundation of whole plea, for the vindication of the reformed churches fr that crime. Our reverend author reinforces the objection sundry instances; as, 1. 'That he hath disproved that se or precise signification of the word in Scripture;' how v let the reader judge. 2. 'That supposing that to be the c sense mentioned in that case of the Corinthians, yet a another sense be intimated in Scripture, and deduced regular and rational consequence.' Perhaps this will not so easy an undertaking, this being the only place where name is mentioned, or thing spoken of in an ecclesiast sense; but when any proof is tendered of what is here firmed, we shall attend unto it. It is said indeed, tha 'separation in judgment in a church be a schism, much m to separate from a church:' but our 'question is about precise notion of the word in Scripture, and consequer from thence, not about consequents from the nature of thi concerning which, if our author had been pleased to h staid awhile, he would have found me granting as muc he could well desire. 3. 1 John ii. 19. is sacrificed, ἀμετρίᾳ ἀνθολκῆς, and interpreted of schism; where (to make venture in imitation of our author) all orthodox interpret and writers of controversies, expound it of apostacy; nei will the context or arguing of the apostle admit of ano exposition. Men's wresting of Scripture to give countena to inveterate errors is one of their worst concomitants then that separation from churches is oftentimes evi readily granted: of what nature that evil is, with what the aggravations of it, a judgment is to be made from pleas and pretences that its circumstances affords: so fa

it proceeds from such dissensions as before were mentioned, so far it proceeds from schism, but in its own nature absolutely considered it is not so.

To render my former assertions the more unquestionably evident, I consider the several accounts given of men's blameable departures from any church or churches mentioned in Scripture, and manifest that none of them come under the head of schism. Apostacy, irregularity of walking, and professed sensuality, are the heads whereunto all blameable departures from the churches in the Scripture are referred.

That there are other accounts of this crime, our author doth not assert; he only says, that 'all or some of the places' I produce, as 'instances of a blameable separation from a church, do mind the nature of schism as precedaneous to the separation.' Whatever the matter is, I do not find him speaking so faintly and with so much caution through his whole discourse as in this place: all or some do it; they mind the nature of schism; they mind it as precedaneous to the separation: so the sum of what he aims at in contesting about the exposition of those places of Scripture is this; some of them do mind (I know not how) the nature of schism, which he never once named as precedaneous to separation; therefore the precise notion of schism in the Scripture doth not denote differences and divisions in a church only; 'quod erat demonstrandum.' That I should spend time in debating a consideration so remote from the state of the controversy in hand, I am sure will not be expected by such as understand it.

Page 77. [p. 149.] of my treatise I affirm, 'that for a man to withdraw or withhold himself from the communion external and visible of any church or churches, on that pretension or plea (be it true or otherwise) that the worship, doctrine, or discipline instituted by Christ is corrupted among them, with which corruption he dares not defile himself, is nowhere in the Scripture called schism; nor is that case particularly exemplified, or expressly supposed, whereby a judgment may be made of the fact at large, but we are left, upon the whole matter, to the guidance of such general rules and principles as are given us for that end and purpose.' Such is my meanness of apprehension, that I could not understand

but that either this assertion must be subscribed unto, as of irrefragable verity, or else that instances to the contrary must have been given out of the Scripture; for on that hinge alone doth this present controversy (and that by consent) turn itself. But our reverend author thinks good to take another course (for which his reasons may easily be conjectured), and excepts against the assertion itself in general: first, as ambiguous and fallacious; and then also intimates that he will scan the words in particular, 'Mihi jussa capessere,' &c. 1. He says, that 'I tell not whether a man may separate where there is corruption in some one of these only, or in all of them; nor, 2. How far some or all of these must be corrupted before we separate.' *Ans.* This is no small vanity under the sun, that men will not only measure themselves by themselves, but others also by their own measure. Our author is still with his finger in the sore, and therefore supposes that others must needs take the same course. Is there any thing in my assertion whether a man may separate from any church or no? any thing upon what corruption he may lawfully so do? any thing of stating the difference betwixt the Presbyterians and Independents? do I at all fix it on this foot of account when I come so to do? I humbly beg of this author, that if I have so obscurely and intricately delivered myself and meaning, that he cannot come to the understanding of my design, nor import of my expressions, that he would favour me with a command to explain myself, before he engage into a public refutation of what he doth not so clearly apprehend. Alas, I do not in this place in the least intend to justify any separation, nor to shew what pleas are sufficient to justify a separation, nor what corruption in the church separated from is necessary thereunto, nor at all regard the controversy his eye is always on; but only declare what is not comprised in the precise Scripture notion of schism, as also how a judgment is to be made of that which is so by me excluded, whether it be good or evil. Would he have been pleased to have spoken to the business in hand, or any thing to the present purpose, it must not have been by an inquiry into the grounds and reasons of separation, how far it may be justified by the plea mentioned, or how far not; when that plea is to be allowed, and when rejected; but

this only was incumbent on him to prove; namely, that such a separation upon that plea, or the like, is called schism in the Scripture, and as such a thing condemned. What my concernment is in the ensuing observations, 'that the Judaical church was as corrupt as ours, that if a bare plea, true or false, will serve to justify men, all separatists may be justified,' he himself will easily perceive. But however, I cannot but tell him by the way, that he who will dogmatize, in this controversy, from the Judaical church, and the course of proceedings amongst them, to the direction and limitation of duty as to the churches of the gospel, considering the vast and important differences between the constitutions of the one and the other, with the infallible obligation to certain principles, on the account of the typical institution in that primitive church, when there neither was nor could be any more in the world, must expect to bring other arguments to compass his design, than the analogy pretended. For the justification of separatists of the reason, if it will ensue, upon the examination for separation, and the circumstances of the separating, whereunto I refer them, let it follow, and let who will complain. But to fill up the measure of the mistake he is engaged in, he tells us, p. 75. 'that this is the pinch of the question, whether a man or a company of men may separate from a true church, upon a plea of corruption in it, true or false, and set up another church, as to ordinances, renouncing that church to be a true church. This,' saith he, 'is plainly our case at present, with the doctor and his associates.' Truly I do not know that ever I was necessitated to a more sad and fruitless employment in this kind of labour and travail. Is that the question in present agitation? is any thing, word, tittle, or iota spoken to it? is it my present business to state the difference between the Presbyterians and Independents? do I any where do it upon this account? do I not every where positively deny that there is any such separation made? nay, can common honesty allow such a state of a question, if that were the business in hand, to be put upon me? are their ordinances and churches so denied by me as is pretended? What I have often said, must again be repeated; the reverend author hath his eye so fixed on the difference between the Presbyterians and the Independents, that he is

at every turn led out of the way into such mistakes, as it was not possible he should otherwise be overtaken withal; this is perhaps 'mentis gratissimus error:' but I hope it would be no death to him to be delivered from it. When I laid down the principles which it was his good will to oppose, I had many things under consideration, as to the settling of conscience in respect of manifold oppositions; and to tell him the truth, least valued that which he is pleased to manage, and to look upon as my sole intendment: if it be not possible to deliver him from this strong imagination, that carries the images and species of independency always before his eyes, we shall scarce speak 'ad idem' in this whole discourse. I desire then that he would take notice, that as the state of the controversy he proposes, doth no more relate to that which peculiarly is pretended to lie under his consideration, than any other thing whatever that he might have mentioned; so when the peculiar difference between him and the Independents comes to be managed, scarce any one term of his state will be allowed. Exceptions are in the next place attempted to be put in to my assertion; that there is no example in the Scripture of any one church's departure from the union which they ought to hold with others, unless it be in some of their departures from the common faith, which is not schism; much with the same success as formerly: let him produce one instance, and, 'en herbam.' I grant the Roman church, on a supposition that it is a church (which yet I utterly deny), to be a schismatical church upon the account of the intestine divisions of all sorts: on what other accounts other men urge them with the same guilt, I suppose he knows by this, that I am not concerned. Having finished this exploit, because I had said, if I were unwilling, I did not understand how I might be compelled to carry on the notion of schism any farther; he tells me, 'though I be unwilling, he doubts not but to be able to compel me.' But who told him I was unwilling so to do? do I not immediately, without any compulsion, very freely fall upon the work? did I say I was unwilling? Certainly it ought not to be thus. Of his abilities in other things I do not doubt; in this discourse he is pleased to exercise more of something else.

There is but one passage more that needs to be remarked,

and so this chapter also is dismissed. He puts in a caveat that I limit not schism to the worship of God, upon these words of mine: 'The consideration of what sort of union in reference to the worship of God' (where he inserts in the repetition, 'mark that'), 'as instituted by Jesus Christ, is the foundation of what I have farther to offer;' whereto he subjoined 'the design of this is, that he may have a fair retreat, when he is charged with breach of union, in other respects, and so with schism, to escape by this evasion: this breach of union is not in reference to the worship of God in one assembly met to that end.' I wish we had once an end of these mistakes, and false uncharitable surmises. By the 'worship of God,' I intend the whole compass of institutions, and their tendency thereunto; and I know that I speak properly enough. In so doing I have no such design as I am charged withal, nor do I need it; I walk not in fear of this author's forces, that I should be providing beforehand to secure my retreat. I have passed the bounds of the precise notion of schism before insisted on, and yet doubt not but, God assisting, to make good my ground. If he judge I cannot, let him command my personal attendance on him at any time, to be driven from it by him: let him by any means prove against me at any time a breach of any union instituted by Jesus Christ, and I will promise him, that with all speed I will retreat from that state, or thing, whereby I have so done. I must profess to this reverend author, that I like not the cause he manages one whit the better for the way whereby he manageth it. We had need watch and pray that we be not led into temptation; seeing we are in some measure not ignorant of the devices of Satan.

Now that he may see this door of escape shut up, that so he may not need to trouble himself any more in taking care lest I escape that way, when he intends to fall upon me with those blows which as yet I have not felt, I shall shut it fast myself, beyond all possibility of my opening again. I here then declare unto him, that whenever he shall prove that I have broken any union of the institution of Jesus Christ, of what sort soever, I will not in excuse of myself insist on the plea mentioned, but will submit to the discipline, which shall be thought meet by him to be exer-

cised towards any one offending in that kind: yet truly on this engagement I would willingly contract with him, that in his next reply he should not deal with me as he hath done in this, neither as to my person, nor as to the differences between us.

CHAP. VI.

HAVING declared and vindicated the Scripture proper notion of schism, and thence discovered the nature of it, with all its aggravations, with the mistakes that men have run into who have suited their apprehensions concerning it unto what was their interests to have it thought to be, and opened a way thereby for the furtherance of peace among professors of the gospel of Jesus Christ; for the farther security of the consciences of men unjustly accused and charged with the guilt of this evil, I proceeded to the consideration of it in the usual common acceptation of the word and things, that so I might obviate whatever with any tolerable pretence is insisted on, as deduced by a parity of reason from what is delivered in the Scripture, in reference to the charge managed by some or other against all sorts of Protestants. Hereupon I grant, that it may be looked on in general as διαίρεσις ἑνώτεος, 'a branch of union,' so that it be granted also, that that union be an union of the institution of Jesus Christ. To find out then the nature of schism under the consideration of the condescension made, and to discover wherein the guilt of it doth consist, it is necessary that we find out what that union is, and wherein it doth consist, whereof it is the breadth and interruption, or is supposed so to be, over and above the breach above-mentioned and described. Now this union being the union of the church, the several acceptations of the church in Scripture are to be investigated, that the union inquired after may be made known. The church in Scripture being taken either for the church catholic, or the whole number of elect believers in the world (for we lay aside the consideration of that part of this great family of God, which is already in heaven, from this distinction), or else for the general visible body of those who profess the gospel of Christ, or for a particular society joining

together in the celebration of the ordinances of the New Testament, instituted by Christ to be so celebrated by them. The union of it, with the breach of that union in these several respects, with the application of the whole to the business under consideration, was to be inquired after; which also was performed.

I began with the consideration of the catholic invisible church of Christ, and the union thereof. Having declared the rise of this distinction, and the necessity of it from the nature of the things themselves; as to the matter of this church, or the church of Christ as here militant on earth, I affirm, and evince it to be, all and only elect believers: the union of this church consists in the inhabitation of the same Spirit in all the members of it, uniting them to the head Christ Jesus, and therein to one another. The breach of this union, I manifested to consist in the loss of that Spirit, with all the peculiar consequences and effects of him in the hearts of them in whom he dwells. This I manifest according to our principles to be impossible; and upon a supposition of it, how remote it would be from schism, under any notion or acceptation of the word; so closing that discourse with a charge on the Romanists, of their distance from an interest in this church of Jesus Christ.

Our reverend author professes that he hath but little to say to these things; some exceptions he puts in unto some expressions used in the explication of my sense, in this particular. That which he chiefly insists upon, is the accommodation of that promise, Matt. xvi. 28. 'Upon this rock will I build my church,' to the church in this sense, which he concludes to belong to the visible church of professors. Now as I am not at all concerned, as to the truth of what I am in confirmation of, to which of these be applied, so I am far from being alone in that application of it to the catholic church which I insist upon: all our divines that from hence prove the perseverance of all individual believers, as all do that I have met withal, who write on that subject, are of the same mind with me. Moreover, the church is built on this rock in its individuals, or I know not how it is so built. The building on Christ, doth not denote a mere relation of a general body to his truth, that it shall always have an existence, but the union of the individuals with him, in their being

built on him, to whom the promise is made. I acknowledge it for as unquestionable a truth as any we believe, that Christ hath had, and ever shall have to the end of the world, a visible number of those that profess his name, and subjection to his kingdom; because of the necessary consequence of profession upon believing; but that that truth is intended in this promise, any farther but in respect of this consequence, I am not convinced. And I would be loth to say, that this promise is not made to every particular believer, and only unto them; being willing to vindicate to the saints of God, all those grounds of consolation which he is so willing they should be made partakers of.

As to the union of this church and the breach of it, our reverend author hath a little to say. Because there may be 'some decays in true grace in the members of this church,' he affirms, 'that in a sort there may be said to be a breach in this union, and so consequently a schism in this body.' He seemed formerly to be afraid lest all schism should be thrust out of the world: if he can retrieve it on the account of any true believer's failing in grace, or falling for a season, I suppose he needs not fear the loss of it, whilst this world continues. But it is fit wise and learned men should take the liberty of calling things by what names they please; so they will be pleased withal, not to impose their conceptions and use of terms on them who are not able to understand the reasons of them. It is true there may be a schism among the members of this church, but not as members of this church, nor with reference to the union thereof. It is granted that schism is the breach of union, but not of every union; much less not a breach of that, which, if there were a breach of, it were not schism. However, by the way, I am bold to tell this reverend author, that this doctrine of his concerning schism in the catholic invisible church, by the failings in grace in any of the members of it for a season, is a new notion; which as he cannot justify to us, because it is false, so I wonder how he will justify it to himself, because it is new. And what hath been obtained by the author against my principles in this chapter, I cannot perceive. The nature of the church in the state considered, is not opposed; the union asserted not disproved; the breach of that union is denied, as I suppose, no less by him than myself. That the instances

that some saints, as members of this church, may sometimes fail in grace more or less for some season; and that the members of this church, though not as members of this church, yet on other considerations, may be guilty of schism, concern not the business under debate, himself I hope is satisfied.

CHAP. VII.

Our progress in the next place is to the consideration of the catholic church visible. Who are the members of this church, whereof it is constituted, what is required to make them so, on what account men visibly professing the gospel may be esteemed justly divested of the privilege of being members of this church, with sundry respects of the church in that sense, are in my treatise discussed. The union of this church, that is proper and peculiar unto it as such, I declared to be the profession of the saving doctrine of the gospel, not everted by any of the miscarriages, errors, or oppositions to it, that are there recounted. The breach of this union, I manifest to consist in apostacy from the profession of the faith, and so to be no schism, upon whomsoever the guilt of it doth fall: pleading the immunity of the Protestants as such from the guilt of the breach of this union, and charging it upon the Romanists, in all the ways whereby it may be broken, an issue is put to that discourse.

What course our reverend author takes in the examination of this chapter, and the severals of it, whereon the strength of the controversy doth lie, is now to be considered. Doth he deny this church to be a collection of all that are duly called Christians in respect of their profession? to be that great multitude, who throughout the world profess the doctrine of the gospel, and subjection to Jesus Christ? doth he deny the union of this church, or that whereby that great multitude are incorporated into one body as visible and professing, to be the profession of the saving doctrines of the gospel, and of subjection to Jesus Christ according to them? Doth he deny the dissolution of this union, as to the interest of any member by it in the body, to be by apostacy

from the profession of the gospel? Doth he charge that apostacy upon those whom he calls Independents, as such, or if he should, could he tolerably defend his charge? Doth he prove that the breach of this union is, under that formality, properly schism? nothing less, as far as I can gather. Might not then the trouble of this chapter have been spared? or shall I be necessitated to defend every expression in my book, though nothing at all to the main business under debate, or else independency must go for a great schism. I confess this is somewhat a hard law, and such as I cannot proceed in obedience unto it, without acknowledging his ability to compel me to go on farther than I am willing; yet I do it with this engagement, that I will so look to myself, that he shall never have that power over me any more; nor will I upon any compulsion of useless, needless cavils and exceptions do so again: so that in his reply he now knows how to order his affairs so, as to be freed from the trouble of a rejoinder.

His first attempt in this chapter is upon a short discourse of mine, in my process, which I profess not to be needful to the purpose in hand, relating to some later disputes about the nature of this church; wherein some had affirmed it to be a genus to particular churches, which are so many distinct species of it, and others that it was a totum made up of particular churches as its parts, both which in some sense I denied; partly out of a desire to keep off all debates about the things of God from being inwrapped and agitated in and under philosophical notions, and feigned terms of art, which hath exceedingly multiplied controversies in the world and rendered them endless, and doth more or less straiten or oppose every truth that is so dealt withal: partly because I evidently saw men deducing false consequents from the supposition of such notions of this church. For the first way, our reverend author lets it pass only with a remark upon my dissenting from Mr. Hooker, of New England, which he could not but note by the way, although he approves what I affirm. A worthy note! as though all the brethren of the presbyterian way, were agreed among themselves in all things of the like importance; or that I were in my judgment enthralled to any man or men, so that it should deserve

when I dissent from them. Truly, I bless God, I am unacquainted with any such frame of spirit, or : of mind, as must be supposed to be in them whose from other men is a matter of such observation. ny master, to whom alone my heart and judgment ıbjection: for the latter, I do not say absolutely that ır churches are not the parts of the catholic visible, ense, but that they are not so parts of it as such, so should be constituted and made up by them, and of r the order and purpose of an instituted church, for bration of the worship of God, and institutions of ıccording to the gospel; which, when our author hat it is, I shall acknowledge myself obliged to him. indeed, that 'it was once possible that all the members atholic church should meet together, to hear one &c. But he is to prove that they were bound to s that catholic church, and not that it was possible he members of it under any other notion or consi- so to convene. But he says, they are bound to do but that the multitude makes it impossible: 'credat that Christ hath bound his church to that which nakes impossible. Neither are they so bound: they ıd, by his own acknowledgment, to be members of ır churches, and in that capacity are they bound so ene, those churches being by the will of God ap- for the seat of ordinances. And so what he adds, in t place, of particular churches being bound ac- to the institution of Christ to assemble for the cele- of ordinances, is absolutely destructive of the former

But he would know a reason why forty or more, not members of one particular church, but only of olic, meeting together, may not join together in all es, as well as they may meet to hear the word l, and often do; to which I answer, that it is because ırist hath appointed particular churches, and there required to them, than the occasional meeting of ıy, or all if possible, of the members of the catholic ıs such, will afford.

eflections upon myself, added in that place, are now o common, that they deserve not any notice. In his discourse, if I may take leave to speak freely to our

reverend author, he wrangles about terms and expressions, adding to, and altering those by me used in this business, at his pleasure, to make a talk to no purpose. The sum of what he pretends to oppose is, that this universal church, or the universality of professors, considered as such, neither formally as members of the church catholic, mystically elect, nor as any members of any particular church, have not as such, any church form of the institution of Christ, by virtue whereof they should make up one instituted church, for the end and purpose of the celebration of the ordinances of the gospel therein. If he suppose he can prove the contrary, let him cease from cavilling at words, and by expressions, which is a facile task for any man to engage in, and no way useful, but to make controversies endless, and answer my reasons against it, which here he passeth over, and produce his testimonies and arguments for that purpose. This trivial ventilation of particular passages cut off from their influence into the whole, is not worth a nut-shell, but is a business fit for them who have nothing else to employ themselves about.

Coming to consider the union that I assign to this church, after whose breach an inquiry is to be made, which is the main, and only thing of his concernment, as to the aim he hath proposed to himself, he passeth it over very slightly, taking no notice at all of my whole discourse, from p. 116. to p. 133. [pp. 169—178.] of my treatise, wherein I disprove the pretensions of other things to be the union, or bond of union to this church; he fixes a very little while on what I assign to be that union. This, I say, 'is profession of the faith of the gospel, and subjection to Jesus Christ according to it:' to which he adds, that they are bound to more than this, viz. 'to the exercise of the same specifical ordinances, as also to love one another, to subjection to the same discipline, and where it is possible, to the exercise of the same numerical worship.' All this was expressly affirmed by me before; it is all virtually contained in their profession, so far as the things mentioned are revealed in the gospel: only as to the celebrating of the same numerical ordinances, I cannot grant that they are obliged hereunto as formally considered members of that church, nor shall, until our reverend author shall think meet to prove, that particular congregations are

not the institutions of Jesus Christ. But hereupon he affirms, that that is a strange assertion used by me, p. 117. namely, 'That if there be not an institution of joining in the same numerical ordinances, the union of this church is not really a church union.' This is no more but what was declared before, nor more than what I urged the testimony of a learned Presbyterian for: no more but this, that the universality of Christians throughout the world, are not under such an institution as that, to assemble together for the celebration of the same numerical ordinances; the pretence of any such institution being supplied by Christ's acknowledged institution of particular churches for that purpose.

What I have offered in my treatise, as evidence that Protestants are not guilty of the breach of this union, and that where any are, their crime is not schism but apostacy, either as to profession or conversation, I leave to the judgment of all candid, sober, and ingenuous readers; for such as love strife, and debates, and disputes, whereof the world is full, I would crave of them, that if they must choose me for their adversary, they would allow me to answer in person, 'viva voce,' to prevent this tedious trouble of writing, which for the most part is fruitless and needless. Some exceptions our author lies in, against the properties of the profession by me required, as necessary to the preservation of this union: as to the first, of professing all necessary saving truths of the gospel, he excepts that the apostles were ignorant of many necessary truths of the gospel for a season, and some had never heard of the Holy Ghost, Acts xxix. and yet they kept the union of the catholic church. And yet our author, before he closeth this chapter, will charge the breach of this union on some, whose errors cannot well be apprehended to lie in the denial of any necessary truth of the gospel, that is indispensably necessary to salvation. As to his instance of the apostles, he knows it is one thing not to know clearly and distinctly for some season, some truths 'in hypothesi,' and another to deny them being sufficiently and clearly revealed 'in thesi;' and for those in the Acts, it is probable they were ignorant of the dispensations of the Holy Ghost, with his marvellous effects under the gospel, rather than of the person of the Holy Ghost: for even, in respect of the former, it is absolutely said that 'the Holy Ghost was

not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' I shall not pursue his other exceptions, being sorry that his judgment leads him to make them; that which alone bears any aspect to the business in hand, he insists on, p. 99. in these words: 'I have intimated and partly proved, that there may be a breach of union, with respect to the catholic church, upon other considerations' (namely, besides the renunciation of the profession of the gospel), 'as first, There is a bond that obliges every member of this church to join together in exercising the same ordinances of worship: when then any man shall refuse to join with others, or refuse others to join with him, here is a branch of love and union among the members of the catholic church, and in the particular churches as parts of the catholic.'

The reader must pardon me for producing and insisting on these things, seeing I do it with this profession, that I can fix on nothing else so much to the purpose in hand; and yet how little these are so, cannot but be evident upon a slight view to the meanest capacities. For, 1. he tells us there may be a breach of union, with respect to the catholic church, on other considerations; not that there may be a breach of the union of the catholic church. 2. That there is a bond binding men to the exercise of ordinances; so there is, binding man to all holiness; and yet he denies the vilest profane persons to break that bond or this union. 3. That there may be a breach of union among the members of the church; but who knows it not, that knows all members of particular churches, are also members of this church general. Our inquiry is after the union of the catholic church visible, what it is, how broken, and what the crime or evil is whereby it is broken, what obligations lie on the members of that church, as they stand under any other formal considerations; what is the evil they are any of them guilty of, in not answering these obligations, we were not at all inquiring, nor doth it in this place concern us so to do. And in what he afterward tells us, of some proceedings contrary to the practice of the universal church, he intends, I suppose, all the churches in the world, wherein the members of the universal church have walked or do so; for the universal church, as such, hath no practice as to celebration of ordinances; and if he suppose it hath, let him tell us what it is,

and when that practice was. His appeal to the primitive believers, and their small number will not avail him: for although they should be granted to be the then catholic visible church (against which he knows what exceptions may be laid from the believers amongst the Jews, such as Cornelius, to whom Christ had not as yet been preached, as the Messiah come, and exhibited), yet as such, they joined not in the celebration of ordinances, but (as yet they were) as a particular congregation; yea, though all the apostles were amongst them, the foundation of all the churches that afterward were called.

He concludes this chapter with an exception to my assertion, 'that if the catholic church be a political body it must have a visible political head, which nothing but the pope claims to be.' Of this he says, '1. There is no necessity; for,' saith he, 'he confesses the commonwealth of the Jews was a political body, and God, who is invisible, was their political head. 2. Jesus Christ is a visible head, yea, sometimes more, 'visus,' seen of men whilst on earth, though now for a time in majesty (as some great princes do), he hath withdrawn himself from the sight of men on earth, yet is he seen of angels and saints in heaven.' *Ans.* 1. I confess God was the King and Ruler of the Jews, but yet that they might be a visible political body, the invisible God appointed to them, under him, a visible head; as the pope blasphemously pretends to be appointed under Jesus Christ. 2. Jesus Christ is in his human nature still visible; as to his person, wherein he is the head of his church, he ever was, and is still invisible. His present absence, is not upon the account of majesty, seeing in his majesty he is still present with us; and as to his bodily absence he gives other accounts, than that here insinuated. Now it sufficeth not to constitute a visible political body, that the head of it, in any respect may be seen, unless as that their head he is seen. Christ is visible, as this church is visible; he in his laws, in his word, that in its profession, in its obedience. But I marvel that our reverend author, thus concluding for Christ to be the political head of this church, as a church, should at the same time contend for such subjects of this head as he doth, p. 96. namely, persons 'contradicting their *profession of the knowledge of* God, by a course of wicked-

ness, manifesting principles of profaneness, wherewith the belief of the truth they profess hath an absolute inconsistency;' as I expressly describe the persons, whose membership in this church, and relation thereby to Christ their head, he pleads for. Are indeed these persons any better than Mahometans, as to church privileges? they are indeed, in some places, as to providential advantages of hearing the word preached; but woe unto them on that account; it shall be more tolerable for Mahometans in that day of Christ, than for them: shall their baptism avail them? though it were valid in its admistration, that is, was celebrated in obedience to the command of Christ, is it not null to them? is not their circumcision uncircumcision? shall such persons give their children any right to church privileges? let them, if you please, be so subject to Christ, as rebels and traitors are subject to their earthly princes: they ought, indeed, to be so, but are they so? do they own their authority? are they obedient to them? do they enjoy any privilege of laws? or doth the apostle any where call such persons as live in a course of wickedness, manifesting principles utterly inconsistent with the profession of the gospel, brethren? God forbid we should once imagine these things so to be! And so much for that chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Independentism and Donatism.

THE title of our author's book is, Independency a great Schism: of this chapter, that it may be the better known what kind of schism it is, Independentism is Donatism. Men may give what title they please to their books and chapters though perhaps few books make good their titles. I am sure this doth not as yet, 'nisi accusasse sufficiat.' Attempts of proof we have not as yet met withal: what this chapter will furnish us withal, we shall now consider. He indeed that shall weigh the title, Independentism is Donatism, and then casting his eye upon the first lines of the *chapter itself*, find that the reverend author says, he cannot

t 'acknowledge, that what I plead for the vindication of otestants from the charge of schism, in their separation m Rome, as the catholic church, to be rational, solid, and icious,' will, perhaps, be at a loss in conjecturing how I like to be dealt withal in the following discourse; a little ience will let him see, that our author lays more weight n the title, than the preface of this chapter; and that h all my fine trappings I am enrolled in the black book the Donatists: but, 1. 'Quod fors feret feramus æquo mo;' or as another saith, 'debemus optare optima, cogi- difficillima, ferre quæcunque erunt;' as the case is fallen , we must deal with it as we can. 1. He saith, 'he is not isfied, that he not only denies the church of Rome (so led) to be a particular church, p. 154. but also affirms it be no church at all.' That he is not satisfied with what firm of that synagogue of Satan where he hath his throne, annot help it, though I am sorry for it.

I am not also without some trouble, that I cannot un- stand what he means by placing my words, so as to in- ate that I say, not only that the church of Rome is no ticular church, but also that it is no church at all; as ugh it might in his judgment or mine be any church, if be not a particular church; for I verily suppose neither nor I judge it to be that catholic church, whereto it pre- ds. But yet as I have no great reason to expect that s reverend author should be satisfied in any thing that I m, so I hope that it is not impossible, but that, without r great difficulty, he may be reconciled to himself, affirming very same thing that I do, p. 113. [p. 168.] It is of Rome hat sense, wherein it claims itself to be a church, that I ak; and in that sense, he says, it is no church of Christ's titution, and so, for my part, I account it no church at : but he adds, that he is 'far more unsatisfied that I un- take the cause of the Donatists, and labour to exempt m from schism, though I allow them guilty of other nes.' But do I indeed undertake the cause of the Do- ists? do I plead for them? will he manifest it by saying re against them in no more words, than I have done? do abour to exempt them from schism? are these the ways peace, love, and truth, that the reverend author walks in? I not condemn *all their* practices and pretensions from

the beginning to the end? can I not speak of their cause in reference to the catholic church and its union, but it must be affirmed that I plead for them? But yet as if righteousness and truth had been observed in this crimination, he undertakes as of a thing granted to give my grounds of doing, what he affirms me to have done: the first is, as he says, 'his singular notion of schism, limiting it only to differences in a particular assembly. 2. His jealousy of the charge of schism to be objected to himself and party, if separating from the true churches of Christ be truly called schism.' *Ans.* What may I expect from others, when so grave and reverend a person as this author is reported to be, shall thus deal with me? Sir, I have no singular notion of schism, but embrace that which Paul hath long since declared, nor can you manifest any difference in my notion from what he hath delivered; nor is that notion of schism at all under consideration in reference to what I affirm of the Donatists (who in truth were concerned in it, the most of them to the utmost), but the union of the church catholic, and the breach thereof. Neither am I jealous or fearful of the charge of schism, from any person living on the earth, and least of all from men proceeding in church affairs upon the principles you proceed on. Had you not been pleased to have supposed what you please, without the least ground, or colour, or reason, perhaps you would have as little satisfied yourself in the charge you have undertaken to manage against me, as you have done many good men, as the case now stands, even of your own judgment in other things.

Having made this entrance, he proceeds in the same way, and, p. 164. lays the foundation of the title of his book and this chapter, of his charge of Donatism, in these words: 'This lies in full force against him and his party, who have broken the union of our churches, and separated themselves from all the Protestant churches in the world, not of their own constitution, and that as no true churches of Christ:' this, I say, is the foundation of his whole ensuing discourse; all the ground that he hath to stand upon in the defence of the invidious title of this chapter, and what fruit he expects from this kind of proceeding, I know not; the day will manifest of what sort this work is; although he may have

ome mistaken apprehensions to countenance his conscience n the first part of his assertion, or that it may be forgiven to inveterate prejudice, though it be false; namely, that I and my party (that is the phraseology this author in his love to unity delights in) have broken the union of their churches (which we have no more done, than they have broken the union of ours, for we began our reformation with them on even terms, and were as early at work as they), yet what colour, what excuse can be invented to alleviate the guilt of the latter part of it, that we have separated from all the reformed churches as no churches? and yet he repeats this again, p. 106. with especial reflection on myself: 'I wonder not,' saith he, 'that the doctor hath unchurched Rome, for he hath done as much to England and all foreign Protestant churches, and makes none to be members of the church, but such as are by covenant and consent joined to some of their congregations.' Now, truly, though ll righteous laws of men in the world, will afford recompense and satisfaction for calumniating accusations and slanders of much less importance than this, here publicly owned by our reverend author, yet seeing the gospel of the blessed God requires to forgive and pass by greater injuries, I shall labour in the strength of his grace to bring my heart unto conformity to his will therein; notwithstanding which, because by his providence I am in that place and condition, that others also that fear his name may be some way concerned in this unjust imputation, I must declare that this is open unrighteousness, wherein neither love nor truth hath been observed. How little I am concerned in his following parallel of Independentism and Donatism, wherein he proceeds with the same truth and candour, or in all that follows thereupon, is easy for any one to judge. He proceeds to scan my answers to the Romanists, as in reference to their charge of schism upon us, and says, 'I do it suitable to my own principles.' And truly if I had not, I think I had been much to blame. I refer the reader to the answers given in my book, and if he like them not, notwithstanding this author's exceptions, I wish he may fix on those that please him better; in them there given, my conscience doth acquiesce.

But he *comes, in the next* place, to arguments, wherein it

he prove more happy than he hath done in accusations, he will have great cause to rejoice. By a double argument, as he says, he will prove that there may be schism besides that in a particular church. His first is this:

'Schism is a breach of union, but there may be a breach of union in the catholic visible church.' His second this: 'Where there are differences raised in matter of faith professed, wherein the union of the catholic church consists, there may be a breach of union, but there may be differences in the catholic, or among the members of the catholic church in matter of faith professed, *ergo*.' Having thus laid down his arguments, he falls to conjecture what I will answer, and how I will evade; but it will quickly appear, that he is no less unhappy in arguing and conjecturing, than he is and was in accusing. For to consider his first argument, if he will undertake to make it good as to its form, I will by the same way of arguing, engage myself to prove what he would be unwilling to find in a regular conclusion. But as to the matter of it, 1. Is schism every breach of union? or is every breach of union schism? Schism in the ecclesiastical notion is granted to be in the present dispute, the breach of the union of a church, which it hath by the institution of Christ; and this not of any union of Christ's institution, but of one certain kind of union; for as was proved, there is a union, whose breach can neither in the language of the Scripture, nor in reason, nor common sense, be called or accounted schism, nor ever was by any man in the world, nor can be without destroying the particular nature of schism, and allowing only the general notion of any separation, good or bad, in what kind soever. So that, secondly, it is granted, not only that there may be a breach of union in the catholic church, but also that there may be a breach of the union of the catholic church, by a denial or relinquishment of the profession wherein it consists; but that this breach of union is schism, because schism is a breach of union, is as true, as that every man who hath two eyes, is every thing that hath two eyes. For his second, it is of the same importance with the first, there may be differences in the catholic church, and breaches of union among the members of it, which are far enough from the breach of the union of that church, as such. Two professors may fall out and

differ, and yet I think continue both of them professors still. Paul and Barnabas did so; Chrysostom and Epiphanius did so; Cyril and Theodoret did so. That which I denied was, that the breach of the union of the catholic church as such, is schism. He proves the contrary, by affirming there may be differences among the members of the catholic church, that do not break the union of it, as such. But he says, though there be apostacy, or heresy, yet there may be schism also; but not in respect of the breach of the same union, which only he was to prove. Besides evil surmises, reproaches, false criminations, and undue suggestions, I find nothing wherein my discourse is concerned to the end of this chapter, p. 109. upon the passage of mine; 'we are thus come off from this part of schism for the relinquishment of the catholic church, which we have not done, and so to do, is not schism, but a sin of another nature and importance;' he adds, 'that the ground I go upon, why separation from a true church (he must mean the catholic church, or he speaks nothing at all to the business in hand) is no schism, is that aforementioned, that a schism in the Scripture notion is only a division of judgment in a particular assembly.' But who so blind as they that will not see? the ground I proceeded on evidently, openly, solely, was taken from the nature of the catholic church, its union, and the breach of that union, and if 'obiter' I once mention that notion, I do it upon my confidence of its truth, which I here again tender myself in a readiness to make good to this reverend author, if at any time he will be pleased to command my personal attendance upon him to that purpose. To repeat more of the like mistakes and surmises, with the wranglings that ensue on such false suppositions to the end of this chapter, is certainly needless; for my part, in and about this whole business of separation from the catholic church, I had not the least respect to Presbyterians or Independents as such, nor to the differences between them, which alone our author out of his zeal to the truth and peace attends unto. If he will fasten the guilt of schism on any on the account of separation from the catholic church, let him prove that that church is not made up of the universality of professors of the gospel throughout the world, under the limitations expressed; that the *union of it as such*, doth not consist in the profes-

sion of the truth; and that the breach of that union, whereby a man ceases to be a member of that church, is schism; otherwise to tell me that I am a sectary, a schismatic, to fill up his pages with vain surmises and supposals, to talk of a difference and schism among the members of the catholic church, or the like impertinences, will never farther his discourse among men, either rational, solid, or judicious. All that ensues to the end of this chapter is about the ordination of ministers, wherein however he hath been pleased to deal with me in much bitterness of spirit, with many clamours and false accusations; I am glad to find him, p. 120. renouncing ordination from the authority of the church of Rome as such, for I am assured, that by so doing, he can claim it no way from, by, or through Rome; for nothing came to us from thence but what came in and by the authority of that church.

CHAP. IX.

We are now gathering towards what seems of most immediate concernment as to this reverend author's undertaking; namely, to treat of the nature of a particular church, its union and the breach of that union; the description I give of such a church is this; 'It is a society of men called by the word to the obedience of the faith in Christ, and joint performance of the worship of God in the same individual ordinances according to the order by him prescribed.' This I profess to be a general description of its nature, waving all contests about accurate definitions, which usually tend very little to the discovery or establishment of truth: after some canvassing of this description, our author tells us, that he grants it to be the definition of a particular church, which is more than I intended it for; only he adds, that according to this description, their churches are as true as ours; which I presume by this time he knows was not the thing in question. His ensuing discourse of the will of Christ, that men should join not all in the same individual congregation, but in this or that, is by me wholly assented unto, and the matter of it *contended for* by me, as I am able; what he is pleased to

add about explicit covenanting and the like, I am not at all for the present concerned in; I purposely waved all expressions concerning it, one way or other, that I might not involve the business in hand with any unnecessary contests; it is possible somewhat hereafter may be spoken to that subject, in a tendency unto the reconciliation of the parties at variance. His argument, in the close of the section for a presbyterian church, from Acts xx. 17. because there is mention of more elders than one in that church, and therefore it was not one single congregation, I do not understand; I think no one single congregation is wholly completed according to the mind of Christ, unless there be more elders than one in it; there should be elders in every church; and, for my part, so we could once agree practically in the matter of our churches, I am under some apprehension that it were no impossible thing to reconcile the whole difference, as to a presbyterian church or a single congregation. And though I be reproved anew for my pains, I may offer ere long to the candid consideration of godly men, something that may provoke others of better abilities and more leisure, to endeavour the carrying on of so good a work. Proceeding to the consideration of the unity of this church, he takes notice of three things laid down by me, previously to what I was farther to assert; all which he grants to be true, but yet will not let them pass without his animadversions. The two first are, that, 1. 'A man may be a member of the catholic invisible church;' and, 2. 'Of the visible catholic church, and yet not be joined to a particular church.' These, as I said, he owns to be true, but asks how I can 'reconcile this with what I said before, namely, that the members of the catholic visible church are initiated into the profession of the faith by baptism;' but where lies the difference? why, saith he, 'baptism, according to his principles, is an ordinance of worship only to be enjoyed in a particular church, whilst he will grant (what yet he doth deny, but will be forced to grant) that a minister is a minister to more than his own church, even to the catholic church, and may administer baptism out of a particular church, as Philip did to the eunuch.' *Ans.* How well this author is acquainted with my principles, hath been already manifested; as to his present mistake, I shall not complain, seeing that some occasion may be ad-

ministered unto it, from an expression of mine, at least as it is printed, of which I shall speak afterward; for the present, he may be pleased to take notice, that I am so far from confining baptism subjectively to a particular congregation, that I do not believe that any member of a particular church was ever regularly baptized: baptism precedes admission into church membership, as to a particular church; the subject of it, is professing believers and their seed; as such they have right unto it, whether they be joined to any particular church or no; suitable to this judgment hath been my constant and uninterrupted practice. I desire also to know, who told him that I deny a minister to be a minister to more than his own church, or averred that he may perform ministerial duty only in and towards the members of his own congregation, for so much as men are appointed the objects of the dispensation of the word, I grant a man, in the dispensations of it, to act ministerially towards not only the members of the catholic church, but the visible members of the world also in contradistinction thereunto.

The third thing laid down by me, whereunto also he assents is, 'that every believer is obliged to join himself to some one of those churches, that there he may abide in doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and prayer:' but my reasons, whereby I prove this, he says he likes not so well: and truly I cannot help it. I have little hope he should like any thing well which is done by me: let him be pleased to furnish me with better, and I shall make use of them; but yet when he shall attempt so to do, it is odds but that one or other, will find as many flaws in them as he pretends to do in mine; but this, he saith, he shall make use of, and that, he shall make advantage of, and I know not what, as if he were playing a prize upon a stage. The third reason is, that which he likes worst of all, and I like the business the better, that what he understands least, that he likes worst; it is, 'that Christ hath given no direction for any duty of worship, merely and purely of sovereign institution, but only to them and by them who are so joined;' hereupon he asks, 1. 'Is baptism a part of worship?' *Ans.* Yes, and to be so performed by them, that is a minister in, or of them; I fear my expression in this place led him to his whole mistake in this matter. 2. 'Prayer and reading of the word in private fa-

es, are they no duty of worship?' *Ans.* Not merely and ly of sovereign institution. 3. 'Is preaching to convert hens a duty of worship?' not, as described, in all cases; n it is, it is to be performed by a minister; and so he ws my answer to his next invidious inquiry, relating to own person; against my fourth reason, taken from the stle's care to leave none out of this order who were con- ed, where it was possible, he gives in the instance of the ch, and others converted where there were not enough ngage in such societies; that is, in them with whom it impossible: my fifth is, from Christ's providing of of- rs for these churches; this also he saith is 'weak as the , for first, Christ provided officers at first for the catholic rch, that is, the apostles. 2. All ordinary officers are set in the catholic church, and every minister is first a mi- er to the catholic church, and if, saith he, he deny this, nows where to find a learned antagonist.'

Ans. But see what it is to have a mind to dispute; will deny that Christ appointed officers for particular rches, or if he should have a mind to do it, will his ar- nents evince any such thing; Christ appointed apostles, holic officers, therefore he did not appoint officers for par- lar churches; though he commanded that 'elders should ordained in every church,' pastors and teachers are set t in the catholic church, therefore Christ hath not ordained cers for particular churches. But this is the way with 'author! If any word offers itself, whence it is possible draw out the mention of any thing, that is, or hath at any e been, in difference between Presbyterians and Inde- dents, that presently is run away withal; for my part, I l not the least thought of the controversy which to no pose at all he would here lead me to; but yet, I must tell a, that my judgment is, that ordinary officers are firstly be ordained in particular churches; and as I know ere to find a learned antagonist as to that particular, so lo, in respect of every thing that I affirm or deny in the siness of religion, and yet I bless the Lord I am not in least disquieted or shaken in my adherence to the truth rofess.

My last reason, he saith, is 'fallacious and inconsequent,' d that because he hath put an inference upon it never in-

tended in it. Now the position that these reasons were produced to confirm being true, and so acknowledged by himself, because it is a truth that indeed I lay some more than ordinary weight upon, it being of great use in the days wherein we live, I would humbly entreat this reverend author to send me his reasons whereby it may be confirmed, and I shall promise him if they be found of more validity than those which, according to my best skill, I have already used, he shall obtain many thanks, and much respect for his favour.

What he remarks upon, or adds to my next discourse, about instituted worship in general, I shall not need to insist on; only by the way I cannot but take notice of that which he calls 'a chief piece of independency,' and that is, 'that those who are joined in church fellowship are so confined, that they cannot or may not worship God in the same ordinances in other churches;' how this comes to be 'a chief piece of independency,' I know not. It is contrary to the known practice of all the churches of England that I am acquainted with, which he calls Independents. For my part, I know but one man of that mind, and he is no child in these things.

For the ensuing discourse about the intercision of ordinances, it being a matter of great importance, and inquired into by me merely in reference to the Roman apostacy, it needs a more serious disquisition, than any thing at present administered by our author will give occasion unto; possibly in convenient time I may offer somewhat farther towards the investigation of the mind of God therein: every thing in this present contest is so warped to the petty difference between Presbyterians and Independents, that no fair progress nor opportunity for it can be afforded. If it may be, in my next debate of it, I shall wave all mention of those meaner differences, and as I remember I have not insisted on them in what I have already proposed to this purpose, so possibly the next time I may utterly escape. For the present, I do not doubt but the Spirit of God in the Scripture, is furnished with sufficient authority to erect new churches, and set up the celebration of all ordinances on supposition that there was an intercision of them. To declare the way of his exerting his authority to this purpose,

with the obviating of all objections to the contrary, is not a matter to be tossed up and down in this scambling chase; and I am not a little unhappy, that this reverend person was in the dark to my design and aim all along, which hath entangled this dispute with so many impertinences. But, however, I shall answer a question which he is pleased to put to me in particular. He asks me then, 'whether I do not think in my conscience that there were no true churches in England until the Brownists our fathers, the Anabaptists our elder brothers, and ourselves arose and gathered new churches?' With thanks for the civility of the inquiry in the manner of its expression, I answer, No; I have no such thoughts, and his pretence of my insinuation of any such thing, is most vain, as also is his insultation thereupon; truly if men will in all things take liberty to speak what they please, they have no reason but to think that they may at one time or other hear that which will displease.

Having investigated the nature of a particular church, I proceed in my treatise of schism, to inquire after the union of it, wherein it doth consist, and what is the breach thereof. The sum is, the joint consent of the members to walk together in celebration of the same numerical ordinances, according to the mind of Jesus Christ, is that wherein the union of such a church doth consist. This is variously excepted against, and I know not what disputes about an implicit and explicit covenant, of specificating forms, of the practice of New and Old England, of admission of church-members, of the right of the members of the catholic church to all ordinances, of the miscarriage of the adependents, of church matriculations, and such like things, not once considered by me in my proposal of the matter in hand, are fallen upon. By the way he falls upon my judgment about the inhabitation of the Spirit, calls it an error, and says, so it hath been reputed by all that are orthodox; using terrible suspicions and intimations of judgments on our way from God, by my falling into that error; when yet I say no more than the Scripture saith in express terms forty times, for which I refer him to what I have written on that subject, wherein I have also the concurrence of Polanus, Bucanus, Dorchetus, with sundry others Lutherans and Calvinists. It may be when he hath seriously weighed

what I have offered to the clearing of that glorious truth of the gospel, he may entertain more gentle thoughts both concerning it and me.

The rest of the chapter I have passed through, once and again, and cannot fix on any thing worthy of farther debate. A difference is attempted to be found in my description of the union of a particular church, in this and another place; because in one place I require the consent of the members to walk together, in another mention only their so doing, when the mention of that only was necessary in that place, not speaking of it absolutely, but as it is the difference of such a church from the church catholic, some impropriety of expression is pretended to be discovered ('id populus curat scilicet'): which yet is a pure mistake of his, not considering unto what especial end and purpose the words are used. He repeats sundry things as in opposition to me, that are things laid down by myself and granted. Doth he attempt to prove that the union of a church is not rightly stated; he confesseth the form of such a church consists in the observance and performance of the same ordinances of worship numerically. I ask, is it the command of Christ that believers should so do? is not their obedience to that command, their consent so to do? are not particular churches instituted of Christ? is it not the duty of every believer to join himself to some one of them? was not this acknowledged above? can any one do so without his consenting to do so? Is this consent any thing but his voluntary submission to the ordinances of worship therein? As an express consent and subjection to Christ in general is required to constitute a man a member of the church catholic visible; so if the Lord Jesus hath appointed any particular church for the celebration of his ordinances; is not their consent who are to walk in them, necessary thereunto? But the topic of an explicit covenant, presenting itself with an advantage, to take up some leaves, would not be waved, though nothing at all to the purpose in hand. After this, my confession made in as much condescension unto compliance as I could well imagine, of the use of greater assemblies, is examined, and excepted against, as 'being in my esteem,' he saith, 'though it be not so indeed, a matter of prudence only.' But I know full well, that he knows not

what esteem or disesteem I have of sundry things of no less importance. The consideration of my 'postulata,' proposed in a preparation to what was to be insisted on, in the next chapter, as influenced from the foregoing dissertations, alone remains, and indeed alone deserves our notice.

My first is this: 'The departing of any man or men from any particular church, as to the communion peculiar to such a church, is nowhere called schism, nor is so in the nature of the thing itself, but is a thing to be judged and receive a title according to the circumstances of it;' to this he adjoins; 'this is not the question, a simple secession of a man or men upon some just occasion is not called schism; but to make causeless differences in a church, and then separating from it, as no church, denying communion with it, hath the nature and name of schism in all men's judgments but his own.' *Ans.* What question doth our reverend author mean? I fear he is still fancying of the difference between Presbyterians and Independents, and squaring all things by that imagination; whether it be a question stated to his mind or no, I cannot tell, but it is an assertion expressive of mine own, which he may do well to disprove if he can. Who told him that raising causeless differences in a church, and then separating from it, is not in my judgment schism? May I possibly retain hopes of making myself understood by this reverend author? I suppose though, that a pertinacious abiding in a mistake is neither schism nor heresy; and so this may be passed over.

My second is, 'One church refusing to hold that communion with another, which ought to be between them, is not schism properly so called.' The reply hereunto is twofold: 1. 'That one church may raise differences in, and with another church, and so cause schism.' 2. 'That the Independents deny any communion of churches, but what is prudential, and so that communion cannot be broken.' To the first I have spoken sufficiently before, the latter is but a harping on the same string. I am not speaking of Independent churches, nor upon the principles of Independents, much less on them which are imposed on them. Let the reverend author suppose or aver what communion of churches he pleaseth, my position holds in reference to it, nor can he disprove it; however, for my part, I am not so-

quainted with those Independents, who allow no communion of churches but what is prudential; and yet it is thought that I know as many as this reverend author doth.

Upon the last proposal we are wholly agreed, so that I shall not need to repeat it; only he gives me a sad farewell at the close of the chapter, which must be taken notice of: 'Is,' saith he, 'not the design of his book to prove, if he could, and condemn us as no churches? let the world be judge;' and I say, let all the saints of God judge; and Jesus Christ will judge whether I have not outrageous injury done me in this imputation: 'but,' saith he, 'unless this be proved, he can never justify his separation.' Sir, when your and our brethren told the bishops, they thanked God they were none of them, and defied the prelatical church, did they make a separation or no; were they guilty of schism? I suppose you will not say so; nor do I; yet have I done any such thing in reference to you or your churches? I have no more separated from you, than you have done from me; and as for the distance which is between us upon our disagreement about the way of reformation, let all the churches of God judge, on which side it hath been managed with more breach of love, on yours or mine. Let me assure you, sir, through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, I can freely forgive unto you all your reproaches, revilings, hard censurings, and endeavours to expose me to public obliquy, and yet hope that I may have, before we die, a place in your heart and prayers.

CHAP. X.

Independency no schism.

We are come now to the chapter that must do the work intended, or else 'operam et oleum perdidimus;' Independentism a great Schism, is the title of it; what this Independentism is, he doth neither here declare, nor in any other part of his book; nor do I know what it is that he intends by it. I hear indeed from him that it is a schism, a sect, but of what peculiar import, or wherein it consists, he hath not declared. I suppose he would have it taken for

ration from true churches, but neither doth the notion
he name, though individiously broached and disavowed
hem, to whom it is ascribed, import any such thing;
is the thing itself owned by them with whom he pre-
s to have to do. I find indeed that he tells us, that all
aries are Independents; Anabaptists, Seekers, Ranters,
kers. Doth he expect that I should undertake their
nce? what if it should appear, that I have done more
nst them than our reverend author, and many of his
hren joined with him; he may perhaps be willing to
myself and those which he is pleased to call my as-
ates, my party, I know not what, with their evils and
arriages. But is this done as becomes a Christian, a
ister, a brother? what security hath he, that had he
the only judge and disposer of things in religion in
nation, if I and my associates had been sent to plant
rches among the Indians, that he should have prevented
tion of the errors and abominations which we have been
tised withal in this generation, unless he had sent for
e D'Alva's instruments to work his ends by? and indeed
e is scarce any sect in the nation, but had they their
res, they would take that course. This may be done by
that are uppermost if they please. But how shall we
w what it is he intends by Independentism? All, it may
that are not Presbyterians are Independents. Among
e some professedly separate, both from them and us
there are none that separate from them but withal they
rate from us, that I know of), because, as they say, nei-
: theirs nor ours are true churches; we grant them to
true churches, but withal deny that we separate from
n; is it possible at once to defend both these sects of
?? Is it possible at once with the same arguments to
rge them? The whole discourse, then, of our reverend
ior being uniform, it can concern but one of these sects
Independents; which it is, any man may judge that
s the least view of his treatise. He deals with them
; unchurch their churches, unminister their ministers,
nnul their ordinances, leaving them churchless, officer-
, and in the like sad condition. Is this Independentism
chism? though that it is properly so called, he cannot
ve, yet I hope he did not expect that I should plead for

it; what I shall do in this case, I profess, well I know not. I here deny that I unminister their ministers, unchurch their churches; hath this author any more to say to me or those of my persuasion? doth not this whole discourse proceed upon a supposition that it is otherwise with them with whom he hath to do? only I must tell him by the way, that if he suppose by this concession, that I justify and own their way, wherein they differ from the congregational ministers in England, to be of Christ's institution, or that I grant all things to be done regularly among them, and according to the mind of Christ, therein I must profess he is mistaken. In brief, by Independentism he intends a separation from true churches, with condemning them to be no churches, and their ministers no ministers, and their ordinances none, or antichristian; whatever becomes of the nature of schism, I disavow the appearing as an advocate in the behalf of this Independentism. If by Independentism he understand the peaceable proceeding of any of the people of God in this nation in the several parts of it, to join themselves by their free consent to walk together in the observation and celebration of all the ordinances of Christ appointed to be observed and celebrated in particular churches, so to reform themselves from the disorders wherein they were entangled, being not able in some things to join in that way of reformation, which many godly ministers, commonly called Presbyterians, have engaged in, and seek to promote, without judging and condemning them as to the whole of their station or ordinances. If this, I say, be intended by Independentism, when the reverend author shall undertake to prove it schism, having not in this book spoken one word or tittle to it, his discourse will be attended unto. This whole chapter then being spent against them who deny them to be true churches, and defend separation, I marvel what can be said unto it by me, or how I come to be concerned in it, who grant them true churches, and deny separation.

But our reverend author, knowing that if this bottom be taken from under him, he hath no foundation for any thing he asserts, thought it not sufficient to charge me over and over with what is here denied, but at length attempts to make it good from mine own words; which if he doth effect

and make good, I confess he changes the whole nature and state of the dispute in hand. Let us see then how he answers this undertaking.

From those words of mine, 'the reformation of any church, or any thing in it, is the reducing of it to its primitive institution:' approving the assertion as true, he labours to evince that I deny their churches to be true churches; how so, I pray? 'why we erect new churches out of no churches; and it had been happy for England if we had all gone to do this work among the Indians.' What will prove England's happiness or unhappiness, the day will manifest; this is but man's day and judgment; he is coming who will not judge by the seeing of the eye, nor by the hearing of the ear. In the mean time, we bless God, and think all England hath cause to bless God, whatever become of us, that he, and our brethren of the same mind with him in the things of God, have their liberty to preach the gospel, and carry on the work of reformation in their native soil, and are not sent into the ends of the earth, as many of ours have been. But how doth our gathering of churches deny them to be true churches? Doth our granting them to be true churches, also grant that all the saints in England are members of their churches? It is notoriously known, that it is and was otherwise, and that when they and we began to reform, thousands of the people of God in these nations had no reason to suppose themselves to belong to one particular church rather than another. They lived in one parish, heard in another, removed up and down for their advantage, and were in bondage on that account all their days.

But he says, 'in some words following I discover my very heart.' I cannot but by the way tell him, that it is a sufficient evidence of his unacquaintedness with me, that he thinks there is need of searching and racking my words to discover my very heart, in any thing that belongs (though in never so remote a distance) to the worship of God. All that know me, know how open and free I am in these things, how ready on all occasions to declare my whole heart; it is neither fear nor favour can influence me unto another frame. But what are the words that make this noble discovery? They are these that follow: 'When any

society or combination of men (whatever hitherto it hath been esteemed) is not capable of such a reduction, and revocation' (that is to its primitive institution) 'I suppose I shall never provoke any wise or sober person, if I profess I cannot look on such a society as a church of Christ.' His reply hereunto is the hinge upon which his whole discourse turneth, and must therefore be considered. Thus then he; 'Is not this, reader, at once to unchurch all the churches of England since the reformation? for it is known, during the reign of the prelates they were not capable of that reduction; and what capacity our churches are now in for that reduction, partly by want of power and assistance from the magistrate, without which some dare not set upon a reformation, for fear of a præmunire, partly by our divisions amongst ourselves, fomented by he knows whom, he cannot but see as well as we lament.' And hereupon he proceeds with sundry complaints of my dealing with them. And now, Christian reader, what shall we say to these things? A naked supposition, of no strength nor weight, that will not hold in any thing or case, namely, that a thing is not to be judged capable of that which by some external force it is withheld from, is the sole bottom of all this charge. The churches of England were capable of that reduction to their primitive institution under the prelates, though in some things hindered by them from an actual reducement; so they are now in sundry places, where the work is not so much as attempted; the sluggard's field is capable of being weeded; the present pretended want of capacity from the non-assistance of the magistrate, whilst perfect liberty for reformation is given, and the work in its several degrees encouraged, will be found to be a sad plea for some, when things come to be tried out by the rule of the gospel. And for our divisions, I confess I begin to discover somewhat more by whom they are fomented, than I did four days ago; for the matter itself. I desire our reverend author to take notice, that I judge every church capable of a reduction to its primitive institution, which, all outward hindrances being removed, and all assistances granted that are necessary for reformation according to the gospel, may be reduced into the form and order appointed unto a particular church by Jesus Christ; and where any society is not so capable, let

them call themselves what they please, I shall advise those therein, who have personally a due right to the privileges purchased for them by Jesus Christ, in the way of their administration by him appointed, to take some other peaceable course to make themselves partakers of them; and for giving this advice, I neither dread the anger nor indignation of any man living in the world. And so I suppose by this time the author knows what is become of his, 'quod erat demonstrandum;' and here in room of it I desire him to accept of this return.

Those who in the judgment of charity were and continue members of the church catholic invisible by virtue of their union with Christ the head thereof, and members of the general visible church, by their due profession of the saving truths of the gospel, and subjection to Christ Jesus their King and Saviour according to them, do walk in love and concord in the particular churches, whereof by their own consent and choice they are members, not judging and condemning other particular churches of Christ, where they are not members as they are such, as to their station and privileges, being ready for all instituted communion with them, as revealed, are not according to any gospel rule, nor by any principles acknowledged amongst Christians, to be judged or condemned as guilty of schism; but such are all they for whom, under any consideration whatever, I have pleaded as to their immunity from this charge, in my treatise of schism; therefore they are not to be judged so guilty. If you please you may add, 'quod erat demonstatum.'

I shall not digress to a recharge upon this reverend author, and those of the same profession with him, as to their mistakes and miscarriages in the work of reformation, nor discuss their ways and principles, wherein I am not satisfied as to their procedure. I yet hope for better things than to be necessitated to carry on the defensative of the way wherein I walk by opposing theirs. It is true that he who stands upon mere defence, is thought to stand upon none at all; but I wait for better things from men, than their hearts will yet allow them to think of. I hope the reverend author thinks, that as I have reasons wherewith I am satisfied as to my own way, so I have those that are of the same weight with me against him. But, whatever he may surmise, I have no mind

to foment the divisions that are amongst us; hence I willingly bear all his imputations without retortion. I know in part how the case is in the world. The greatest charges have not always the most of truth; witness Papists, Lutherans, Prelatists, Anabaptists. I hope I can say in sincerity, I am for peace; though others make themselves ready for war.

But we must proceed a little farther, though as to the cause by me undertaken to be managed, causelessly. The discourse of our author from the place fixed on, wherein he faintly endeavoured to make good the foundation of this chapter, which I have already considered, consists of two parts. 1. His animadversions on some principles which I lay down, as necessary to be stated aright and determined, that the question about gathering churches may be clearly and satisfactorily debated. Some of them, he says, have been handled by others, which if it be a rule of silence to him and me, it might have prevented this tedious debate: whatever his thoughts may be of my pamphlet, I do not fear to affirm of his treatise, that I have found nothing in it, from the beginning to the ending, but what hath lien neglected on booksellers' stalls for above these seven years. For the rest of those principles, which he excepts against, as he thinks meet, I leave their consideration to that farther inquiry, which the Lord assisting, I have destined them unto. The way of gathering churches upon a supposition of their antecedency to officers, he says, is very pretty, and loads it with the difficulty of men's coming to be baptized in such a case; but as I can tell him of that which is neither true nor pretty, in the practice of some whom he knows, or hath reason so to do, so I can assure him that we are not concerned in his objection about baptism, and with them who may possibly be so, it is a ridiculous thing to think it an objection. And for that part of my inquiry, whether the church be before ordinary officers, or they before it, as slight as he is pleased to make of it, it will be found to lie very near the bottom of all our differences, and the right stating of it, to conduce to the composure and determination of them. His charges and reflections which he casts about in his passage, are not now to be farther mentioned; we have had them over and over, indeed we have had little else. If strong

lement, passionate affirmations, complaints, charges, false putations and the like, will amount to a demonstration in business, he hath demonstrated independentism to be a at schism.

He shuts up his discourse as he began it, reciting my ds by adding, interposing, perverting, commenting, in- ring; he makes them speak what he pleases, and com- es the ends of his delight upon them. What content- st he hath received in his so doing, I know not; nor shall press what thoughts I have of such a course of proce- e: this only I shall say, it is a facile way of writing trea- s and proving whatever men have a mind unto.

My last task is to look back to the beginning of this last pter, and to gather up in our passage what may seem to pect the business in hand, and so the whole matter will dismissed. The plea insisted on for immunity from the rge of schism, with reference to the episcopal govern- nt of the church of England, and the constitution which er it it is pretended to have had, he passes over, though sundry accounts his concernments lie as deeply in it as in y thing pleaded in that treatise. The things he is pleased take notice of, as far as they tend in the least to the issue the debate between us, shall be reviewed. Considering several senses wherein that expression, 'the church of gland,' may be taken, I manifest in my treatise, in which them, and how far, we acknowledge ourselves to have n, and to continue members of the church of England. e first is as it comprises the elect believers in England: at the unity of the church in this sense is, was before need; our desire to be found members of this church, h our endeavour to keep the unity of it in the bond of ace, was declared. I am grieved to repeat our reverend thor's exceptions to this declaration; says he, 'Unless he nk there are no members of this church in England, but se that are of his formed particular churches, I fear he l be found to break the union that ought to be between m.' And why so, I pray? The union of the members of e church in this sense, consists in their joint union to, and th, Christ their head by one spirit. What hath the reverend thor to charge upon me with reference thereunto? Let e speak out to the utmost; yea, I have some reason to

think that he will scarce spare, where he can strike; God forbid that I should think all the members of the catholic church in England to be comprised either jointly or severally in their churches or ours, seeing it cannot be avoided, but you will keep up those notes of division. I doubt not but there be many thousands of them who walk neither with you nor us. He adds, that by gathering saints of the first magnitude, we do what lies in us, to make the invisible church visible: it is confessed, we do so; yea, we know that that church which is invisible in some respects, and under one formal consideration, is visible as to its profession which it makes unto salvation. This, with all that lies in us, we draw them out unto: what he adds about the churches being elect, and the uncomely parts of it, which they may be for a season who are elect believers, because it must be spoken are useles cavils. For the scornful rejection of what I affirm concerning our love to all the members of this church, and readiness to tender them satisfaction in case of offence, with his insinuation of my want of modesty and truth in asserting these thoughts, because he will one day know that the word he so despises were spoken in sincerity, and with the reverence of the great God, and out of love to all his saints, I shall not farther vindicate them; such hay and stubble must needs burn.

My next profession of our relation to the church of England, in respect of that denomination given to the body of professors in this nation, cleaving to the doctrine of the gospel, here preached and established by law, as the public profession of this nation. But he tells me, first, 1. 'That many independent churches of this nation, are grossly apostatized from that doctrine, and so are heretical.' 2. 'That the worship was professed and protested, and established as well as the doctrine, and that we are all departed from it, and so are schismatical; for we hold communion with them,' he says 'in the same doctrine, but not in the same worship.' *Ans.* His first exception ariseth from the advantage he makes use of, from his large use of the word 'independent,' which will serve him in his sense for what end he pleaseth. In the sense before declared, his charge is denied. Let him prove it by instance if he be able. Surely God hath not given orthodox men leave to speak what they please, without due regard to

re and truth. 2. As to the worship established in this na-
n by law (he means the way of worship, for the substan-
ls of it we are all agreed in), I suppose he will not say a
inquishment of the practice of it is schism; if he do, I
ow what use some men will make of his affirmation, though
now not how he will free himself from being schismatical;
his renewed charge of schism, I cannot, I confess, be
ved at it, proceeding from him, who neither doth nor will
ow what it is. His next endeavour is to make use of an-
er concession of mine, concerning our receiving of our re-
neration and new birth by the preaching of the word in
gland; saying, could they make use of our preaching, &c.
t the truth is, when the most of us by the free grace of
d, received our new birth through the preaching of the
rd, neither they nor we, as to the practice of our ways,
re in England; so that their concernment as such, in the
ncession is very small; and we hope since in respect of
ers, our own ministry hath not been altogether fruitless,
ough we make no comparison with them.

In rendering of the next passage which is concerning Ana-
ptists and Anabaptism, I shall not contend with him; he
th not in the least impaired the truth of what I assert in
erence to them and their way. I cannot but take notice
that passage, which for the substance of it hath so often
cured, and that is this, 'Doth not himself labour in this
ok to prove that the administration of ordinances in our
emblies is null, our ordination null and antichristian.'
r the proof of which suggestion he refers his reader to p. 197.
211.] of my book. I confess, seeing this particular quota-
n, I was somewhat surprised, and began to fear that some
pression of mine (though contrary to my professed judg-
nt) might have given countenance to this mistake, and so
pleaded as a justification of all the uncharitableness and
nething else, wherewith his book is replenished; but
ning to the place I was quickly delivered from my trouble,
ough I must ingenuously confess I was cast into another,
ich I shall not now mention.

Page 167. we arrive at that which alone almost I ex-
cted would have been insisted on, and quite contrary
ereto, it is utterly waved; namely, the whole business of a
tional church, upon which account indeed all the pretence

of the charge this reverend author is pleased to manage, doth arise. Take that out of the way, and certainly they, and we are upon even terms; and if we will be judged by them who were last in possession of the reiglement of that church, upon supposition that there is such a church still, they are no more interested in it than we, yea, are as guilty of schism from it as we. But that being set aside and particular churches only remaining, it will be very difficult for him to raise the least pretence of his great charge. But let us consider what he thinks meet to fasten on, in that discourse of mine about a national church. The first thing is my inquiry, whether the denial of the institution of a national church (which he pleads not for) doth not deny in consequence that we had either ordinances or ministry amongst us? to which I say, that though it seems so to do, yet indeed it doth not, because there was then another church-state, even that of particular churches amongst us; with many kind reflections of my renouncing my ministry and rejecting of my jejune and empty vindication of their ministry (which yet is the very same that himself fixes on), he asks me, how I can in my conscience believe, that there were any true ministers in this church in the time of its being national? and so proceeds to infer from hence my denying of all ministry and ordinances among them. Truly, though I were more to be despised than I am (if that be possible), yet it were not common prudence for any man to take so much pains to make me his enemy, whether I will or no. He cannot but know that I deny utterly, that ever we had indeed, whatever men thought, a national church; for I grant no such thing as a national church in the present sense contended about. That in England under the rule of the prelates, when they looked on the church as national, there were true churches, and true ministers, though in much disorder as to the way of entering into the ministry and dispensing of ordinances, I grant freely; which is all this reverend author, if I understand him, pleads for; and this, he says, I was unwilling to acknowledge, lest I should thereby condemn myself as a schismatic. Truly, in the many sad differences and divisions that are in the world amongst Christians, I have not been without sad and jealous thoughts of heart, lest by any doctrine or practice of mine I should occasionally contribute any

hing unto them; if it hath been otherwise with this author, envy not his frame of spirit. But I must freely say, that aving, together with them, weighed the reasons for them, I have been very little moved with the clamorous accusaions, and insinuations of this author. In the mean time, if t be possible to give him satisfaction, I here let him know, hat I assent unto that sum of all he hath to say, as to the hurch of England; namely, that the true and faithful miisters, with the people in their several congregations, adiniistering the true ordinances of Jesus Christ, whereof aptism is one, was and is the true church-state of England, rom which I am not separated; nor do I think that some ddition of human prudence, or imprudence can disannul the rdinances of Jesus Christ, upon the disavower made of any ther national church-state; and the assertion of this, to nswer all intents and purposes, I suppose now that the everend author knows that it is incumbent on him to prove, hat we have been members of some of these particular hurches in due order, according to the mind of Christ, to ll intents and purposes of church membership, and that we have in our individual persons raised causeless differences n those particular churches whereof we were members respectively, and so separated from them, with the condemnaion of them; or else, according to his own principles, he falls in his brotherly conclusion, ἴδου ῥόδος, ἴδου πηδήμα. I uppose the reader is weary of pursuing things so little to ur purpose: if he will hear any farther, that Independents re schismatics, that the setting up of their way hath pened a door to all evils and confusions, that they have eparated from all churches, and condemn all churches in he world but their own; that they have hindered reformaion and the setting up of the Presbyterian church; that eing members of our churches, as they are members of the ation, because they are born in it, yet they have deserted hem; that they gather churches which they pretend to be pick and span new;' they have separated from us, that they ountenance Quakers, and all other sectaries, that they will eform a national church whether men will or no, though hey say that they only desire to reform themselves, and lead for liberty to that end.

If any man, I say, have a mind to read or hear of this any

more, let him read the rest of this chapter, or else converse with some persons whom I can direct him to, who talk at this wholesome rate all the day long.

What seems to be my particular concernment, I shall a little farther attend unto. Some words (for that is the manner of managing this controversy) are culled out from pp. 259, 260. [p. 243.] to be made the matter of farther contest. Thus they lie in my treatise: 'As the not giving a man's self up unto any way, and submitting to any establishment pretended or pleaded to be of Christ, which he hath not light for, and which he was not by any act of his own formerly engaged in, cannot with any colour or pretence of reason be reckoned to him for schism, though he may if he persist in his refusal prejudice his own edification; so no more can a man's peaceable relinquishment of the ordinary communion of one church in all its relations be so esteemed.' These words have as yet unto me a very harmless aspect; but our reverend author is sharpsighted, and sees I know not what monsters in them: for first, saith he, 'here he seems to me to be a very sceptic in his way of independency:' why so, I pray? 'This will gratify all sects, Quakers and all, with a toleration:' how, I pray? it is schism, not toleration, we are treating about. But 'this leaves them to judge of, as well as others, what is, and what is not according to the mind of Christ;' why, pray sir, who is appointed to judge finally for them? 'why then should they be denied their liberty?' but is that the thing under consideration? had you concluded that their not submitting to what they have not light for its institution, is not properly schism, you should have seen how far I had been concerned in the inference: but excursions unto Quakers, &c. are one topic of such discourses. But now he asks me one question, it seems to try whether I am a sceptic or no; 'Whether,' saith he, 'does he believe his own way to be the only true way of Christ, for he hath instituted but one way, having run from and renounced all other ways in this nation?' I promise you this is a hard question, and not easily answered. If I deny it, he will say I am a sceptic, and other things also will be brought in: if I affirm it, it may be he will say that I condemn their churches for no churches, and the like: it is good to be wary when a man hath to deal with wise men; how if I

d say that our way and their way is for the substance
em, one way, and so I cannot say that my way is the
true way exclusively to theirs: I suppose this may do
y well. But I fear this will scarce give satisfaction,
et I know not well how I can go any farther; yet this
add; I do indeed believe, that wherein their way and
ay differ, our way is according to the mind of Christ,
ot theirs: and this I am ready at any time (God as-
g) personally to maintain to him: and as for my run-
from ways of religion, I dare again tell him, these re-
hes and calumnies become him not at all. But he pro-
, 'If so,' saith he,' is not every man bound to come into
d not upon every conceived new light to relinquish it?'
, I think Mr. C. himself is bound to come into it, and
do not think that his not so doing makes him a schis-
: and as for relinquishment, I assert no more than what
mself concludes to be lawful.

nd thus, Christian reader, I have given thee a brief ac-
t of all things of any importance that I could meet
l in this treatise, and of many which are of very little.
ou shalt be pleased to compare my treatise of Schism
the refutation of it, thou wilt quickly see how short
is of that which it pretends to; how untouched my
iples do abide; and how the most material parts of my
urse are utterly passed by, without any notice taken of
. The truth is, in the way chosen by this reverend
or to proceed in, men may multiply writings to the
d's end, without driving any controversy to an issue;
anting and harping on words, making exceptions to
cular passages, and the like, is an easy and facile, and
ome men a pleasant labour: what small reason our
or had to give his book the title it bears, unless it were
iscover his design, I hope doth by this time appear.
h of the proof of it lies in the repeated asseverations of
is so, and it is so. If he shall be pleased to send me
l of one argument tending that way, that is not founded
n evident mistake, I will promise him, if I live, a re-
ideration of it.

n the mean time I humbly beg of this reverend author
he would review, in the presence of the Lord, the frame
pirit wherein *he wrote* this charge; as also, that he

would take into his thoughts all the reproaches, and all that obloquy he hath endeavoured to load me causelessly and falsely withal. As for myself, my name, reputation, and esteem with the churches of God, to whom he hath endeavoured to render me odious, I commit the whole concernment of them to him, whose presence through grace I have hitherto enjoyed, and whose promise I lean upon, that he will 'never leave me nor forsake me.' I shall not complain of my usage: but what am I? of the usage of many precious saints and holy churches of Jesus Christ, to him that lives and sees, any farther than by begging that it may not be laid to his charge: and if so mean a person as I am, can in any way be serviceable to him, or to any of the churches that he pleads for, in reference to the gospel of Christ, I hope my life will not be dear to me that it may effect it; and I shall not cease to pray that both he and those who promoted this work in his hand, may at length consider the many calls of God that are evident upon them, to lay aside these unseemly animosities, and to endeavour a coalition in love, with all those who in sincerity call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

For the distances themselves that are between us, wherein we are not as yet agreed; what is the just state of them, the truth and warrantableness of the principles whereupon we proceed, with the necessity of our practice in conformity thereunto; what we judge our brethren to come short in, of, or wherein to go beyond the mind of Jesus Christ; with a farther ventilation of this business of schism, I have some good grounds of expectation, that possibly ere long we may see a fair discussion of these things, in a pursuit of truth and peace.

AN

ANSWER

TO A

LATE TREATISE OF MR. CAWDREY,

ABOUT THE

NATURE OF SCHISM.

δεῖ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι, ὡς Θεοῦ οἰκονόμον, μὴ αὐθάδη, μὴ ὀργίλον, μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ.—Tit. i. 7.

AN

ANSWER TO A LATE TREATISE

ABOUT THE

NATURE OF SCHISM.

CHRISTIAN READER,

I HAVE not much to say unto thee, concerning the ensuing
eatise;[a] it will speak for itself with all impartial men;
uch less shall I insist on the commendation of its author,
ho also being dead ἔτι λαλεῖται; and will be so, I am per-
uaded, whilst Christ hath a church upon the earth. The
eatise itself was written sundry years ago, immediately
pon the publishing of Mr. Cawdrey's accusation against
m; I shall not need to give an account whence it hath
en, that it saw the light no sooner; it may suffice, that in
ine own behalf and of others, I do acknowledge that in
e doing of sundry things seeming of more importance,
is ought not to have been omitted. The judgment of the
thor approving of this vindication of himself as necessary,
nsidering the place he held in the church of God, should
ve been a rule unto us, for the performance of that duty,
hich is owing to his worth and piety, in doing and suffer-
g for the truth of God. It is now about seven months
o, since it came into my hands; and since I engaged my-
lf into the publication of it, my not immediate proceeding
erein, being sharply rebuked by a fresh charge upon my-
lf from that hand, under which this worthy person so far
ffered, as to be necessitated to the ensuing defensative, I
ve here discharged that engagement. The author of the
arge against him, in his epistle to that against me, tells

[a] This answer to Mr. Cawdrey was prefixed to, 'A Defence of Mr. John Cotton
m the imputation of Self-contradiction, charged on him by Mr. Daniel Cawdrey,
itten by himself not *long before his Death*.'—Editor.

his reader, that 'It is thought that it was intended by another (and now promised by myself) to be published to cast a slur upon him.' So are our intentions judged, so our ways, by thoughts and reports. Why a vindication of Mr. Cotton should cast a slur upon Mr. Cawdrey, I know not. Is he concerned in spirit or reputation in the acquitment of a holy, reverend person now at rest with Christ, from imputations of inconstancy and self-contradiction? Is there not room enough in the world, to bear the good names of Mr. Cotton and Mr. Cawdrey, but that if one be vindicated the other must be slurred? He shall find now by experience, what assistance he found from him who loved him, to bear his charge, and to repel it, without any such reflection on his accuser, as might savour of an intention to slur him; 'male mens, malus animus;' the measure that men fear from others, they have commonly meted out unto them beforehand. He wishes those 'that intend to rake in the ashes of the dead, to consider whether they shall deserve any thanks for their labour.' How the covering of the dead with their own comely garments, comes to be a raking into their ashes, I know not; his name is alive, though he be dead; it was that, not his person, that was attempted to be wounded by the charge against him. To pour forth that balm for its healing, now he is dead, which himself provided whilst he was alive, without adding or diminishing one syllable, is no raking into his ashes; and I hope the δεύτεραι φροντίδες of the reverend author, will not allow him to be offended, that this friendly office is performed to a dead brother; to publish this his defence of his own innocency, written in obedience to a prime dictate of the law of nature, against the wrong which was not done him in secret.

But the intendment of this prefatory discourse being my own concernment, in reference to a late tract of Mr. Cawdrey's, bearing in its title and superscription, a vindication from my unjust clamours and false aspersions; I shall not detain the reader with any farther discourse of that, which he will find fully debated in the ensuing treatise itself; but immediately address myself to that, which is my present peculiar design. By what ways and means the difference betwixt us is come to that issue wherein now it *stands* stated, in the expressions before mentioned, I shall

must need to repeat. Who first let out those waters of strife, who hath filled their streams with bitterness, clamour, and false aspersions, is left to the judgment of all that fear the Lord, who shall have occasion at any time to reflect upon those discourses. However it is come to pass, I must acknowledge, that the state of the controversy between us is now degenerated into such a useless strife of words, as that I dare publicly own engagements into studies of so much more importance unto the interest of truth, piety, and literature, as that I cannot, with peace in my own retirements, be much farther conversant therein. Only whereas I am not in the least convinced that Mr. Cawdrey hath given satisfaction to my former expostulations, about the injuries done me in his other treatise, and hath evidently added to the number and weight of them in this, I could not but lay hold of this opportunity given, by my discharging a former promise, once more to remind him of some miscarriages, exceedingly unbecoming his profession and calling; which I shall do in a brief review of his epistle and treatise. Upon the consideration whereof, without charging him or his way with schism, in great letters on the title-page of this book, I doubt not but it will appear, that the guilt of the crime he falsely, unjustly, and uncharitably chargeth upon others, may be laid more equitably at his own door; and that the shortness of the covering to hide themselves, used by him and others from the inquisition made after them for schism, upon their own principles, will not be supplied by such outcries as those he is pleased to use after them, who are least of all men concerned in the matter under contest, there being no solid medium, whereby they may be impleaded. And in this discourse I shall, as I suppose, put an end to my engagement in this controversy. I know no man whose patience will enable him to abide always in the consideration of things to so little purpose; were it not that men bear themselves on high by resting on the partial adherence of many to their dictates, it were impossible they should reap any contentment in their retirements from such a management of controversies as this. Independency is a great schism; it hath made all the divisions amongst us: Brownists, Anabaptists, and all sectaries are Independents; they deny our ministers and churches, they separate from us, all errors

come from among them, this I have been told, and that I have heard, is the sum of this treatise. Who they are of whom he speaks, how they came into such a possession of all church-state in England, that all that are not with them are schismatics; how 'de jure,' or 'de facto,' they came to be so instated; what claim they can make to their present stations, without schism, on their own principles; whether granting the church of England as constituted when they and we begun that which we call reformation, to have been a true instituted church they have any power of rule in it, but what hath been got by violence; what, that is purely theirs, hath any pretence of establishment from the Scripture, antiquity, and the laws of this land? I say, with these and the like things which are incumbent on him to clear up before his charges with us will be of any value, our author troubleth not himself. But to proceed to the particulars by him insisted on.

1. He tells the reader in his epistle, that his unwillingness to this rejoinder was heightened by the necessity he found of discovering some personal weaknesses and forgetfulnesses in me, upon my denial of some things which were known to be true, if he should proceed therein; for what he intimates of the unpleasantness that it is to him, to discover things of that importance in me, when he professeth his design to be to impair my authority, so far that the cause I own may receive no countenance thereby; I leave it to him, who will one day reveal the secrets of all hearts, which at present are open and naked unto him: but how, I pray, are the things by me denied, known to be true? seeing it was unpleasant and distasteful to him to insist upon them, men might expect that his evidence of them was not only open, clear, undeniable, and manifest as to its truth, but cogent as to their publication. The whole insisted on is, if there be any truth in reports, 'hic nigræ succus loliginis, hæc est ærugo mera.' Is this a bottom for a minister of the gospel to proceed upon, to such charges as those insinuated? is not the course of nature set on fire at this day, by reports? Is any thing more contrary to the royal law of charity, than to take up reports as the ground of charges and accusations? Is there any thing more unbecoming a man, laying aside all considerations of Christianity, than to

uffer his judgment to be tainted, much more his words and ublic expressions, in charging and accusing others to be egulated by reports? And whereas we are commanded to peak evil of no man, may we not on this ground, speak vil of all men, and justify ourselves by saying it is so, if eports be true? The prophet tells us, that a combination or his defaming and reproach was managed among his adversaries, Jer. xx. 10. 'I have heard the defaming of many, ear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it.' If they can have any to go before them in the transgression of that law, which he who knows how the tongues of men re set on fire of hell, gave out to lay a restraint upon them, 'Thou shalt not raise a false report,' Exod. xxiii. 1. they will second it, and spread it abroad to the utmost, for his disadvantage and trouble. Whether this procedure of our reverend author, come not up to the practice of their design, I leave to his own conscience to judge. Should men suffer their spirits to be heightened by provocations of this nature, unto a recharge from the same offensive dunghill of reports, what monsters should we speedily be transformed unto? But this being far from being the only place wherein appeal is made to reports and hearsays by our author, I shall have occasion in the consideration of the severals of them, to reassume this discourse. For what he adds about the space of time wherein my former reply was drawn up, because I know not whether he had heard any report insinuated to the contrary to what I affirmed, I shall not trouble him with giving evidence thereunto: but only add, that here he hath the product of half that time, which I now interpose upon the review of my transcribed papers: only whereas it is said that Mr. Cawdrey is an ancient man, I cannot but wonder he should be so easy of belief. Arist. Rhetor. lib. 2. c. 18. tells us, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, ἄπιστοι δι' ἀπειρίαν, and not apt to believe; whence on all occasions of discourse προστιθέασιν ἀεὶ τὸ ἴσως καὶ πάχα; but he believes all that comes to hand with an easy faith, which he hath totally in his own power to dispose of at pleasure. That I was in passion when I wrote my review, is his judgment; but this is but man's day; we are in expectation of that, wherein 'the world shall be judged in righteousness.' It is no *possible that my* spirit was not in that frame in all

things, wherein it ought to have been; but that the reverend author knows not. I have nothing to say to this, but that of the philosopher, Ἐὰν τὶς σοι ἀπαγγείλῃ ὅτι ὁ δεῖνα σε κακῶς λέγει, μὴ ἀπολογοῦ πρὸς τὰ λεχθέντα, ἀλλ' ἀποκρίνου ὅτι ἀγνόει, γὰρ τὰ ἄλλα προστόντα μοι κακὰ ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἂν ταῦτα μόνα ἔλεγεν, Epic. cap. 48. Much, I confess, was not spoken by me (which he afterward insisteth on) to the argumentative part of his book, which as in an answer I was not to look for, so to find had been a difficult task. As he hath nothing to say unto the differences among themselves both in judgment and practice, so how little there is in his recrimination of the differences among us, as that one and the same man differeth from himself, which charge he casts upon Mr. Cotton and myself, will speedily be manifested to all impartial men. For the treatise itself, whose consideration I now proceed unto, that I may reduce what I have to say unto it unto the bounds intended, in confining my defensative unto this preface, to the treatise of another; I shall refer it unto certain heads, that will be comprehensive of the whole, and give the reader a clear and distinct view thereof.

I shall begin with that which is least handled in the two books of this reverend author, though the sum of what was pleaded by me in my treatise of schism. For the discovery of the true nature of schism, and the vindication of them who were falsely charged with the crime thereof, I laid down two principles as the foundation of all that I asserted in the whole cause insisted on; which may briefly be reduced to these two syllogisms.

1. If in all and every place of the New Testament where there is mention made of schism, name or thing, in an ecclesiastical sense, there is nothing intended by it but a division in a particular church; then that is the proper Scripture notion of schism in the ecclesiastical sense; but in all and every place, &c. *ergo*, The proposition being clear and evident in its own light, the assumption was confirmed in my treatise, by an induction of the several instances that might any way seem to belong unto it.

My second principle was raised upon a concession of the general nature of schism restrained with one necessary limi*tation*, and amounts unto this argument:

If schism in an ecclesiastical sense be the breach of a union of Christ's institution, then they who are not guilty of the breach of a union of Christ's institution, are not guilty of schism; but so is schism: *ergo*,

The proposition also of this syllogism, with its inference being unquestionable, for the confirmation of the assumption I considered the nature of all church-union as instituted by Christ, and pleaded the innocency of those whose defence in several degrees I had undertaken, by their freedom from the breach of any church-union. Not finding the reverend author in his first answer to speak clearly and distinctly to either of those principles, but to proceed in a course of perpetual diversion from the thing in question, with reflections, charges, &c. all rather I hope out of an unacquaintedness with the true nature of argumentation, than any perverseness of spirit, in cavilling at what he found he could not answer; I earnestly desired him in my review that we might have a fair and friendly meeting, personally to debate these principles which he had undertaken to oppose, and so to prevent trouble to ourselves and others, in writing and reading things remote from the merit of the cause under agitation; what returns I have had hitherto, the reader is now acquainted withal from his rejoinder, the particulars whereof shall be farther inquired into afterward.

The other parts of his two books consist in his charges upon me, about my judgment in sundry particulars, not relating in the least that I can as yet understand, unto the controversy in hand. As to his excursions about Brownists, Anabaptists, Seekers; rending the peace of their churches, separating from them, the errors of the separatists, and the like, I cannot apprehend myself concerned to take notice of them; to the other things an answer shall be returned, and a defence made, so far as I can judge it necessary. It may be our author seeks a relief from the charge of schism that lies upon him and his party (as they are called) from others, by managing the same charge against them, who he thinks will not return it upon them; but for my part, I shall assure him, that were he not in my judgment more acquitted upon my principles than upon his own, I should be necessitated to stand upon even terms with him herein; but to have ad-

vantages from want of charity, as the Donatists had against the Catholics, is no argument of a good cause.

In the first chapter there occurs not any thing of real difference as to the cause under agitation, that should require a review, being spent wholly in things ἔξω τοῦ πραγματος; and therefore I shall briefly animadvert on what seems of most concernment therein, in the manner of his procedure. His former discourse, and this also, consisting much of my words perverted by adding in the close something that might wrest them to his own purpose, he tells me in the beginning of his third chapter, that 'this is to turn my testimony against myself, which is,' as he saith, 'an allowed way of the clearest victory,' which it seemeth he aimeth at; but nothing can be more remote from being defended with that pretence than this way of proceeding. It is not of urging a testimony from me, against me, that I complained, but the perverting of my words, by either heading or closing of them with his own, quite to other purposes than those of their own intendment; a way whereby any man may make other men's words to speak what he pleaseth: as Mr. Biddle, by his leading questions and knitting of Scriptures to his expressions in them, makes an appearance of constraining the words of God to speak out all his Socinian blasphemies.

In this course he still continues, and his very entrance gives us a pledge of what we are to expect in the process of his management of the present business; whereas I had said, that 'considering the various interests of parties at difference, there is no great success to be promised by the management of controversies, though with never so much evidence and conviction of truth;' to the repetition of my words he subjoins the instance of 'sectaries, not restrained by the clearest demonstration of truth,' not weighing how facile a task it is to supply Presbyterians in their room; which in his account is, it seems, to turn his testimony against himself, and, as he somewhere phraseth it, 'to turn the point of his sword into his own bowels;' but, 'nobis non licet esse tam disertis;' neither do we here either learn or teach any such way of disputation.

His following leaves are spent for the most part in slighting the notion of schism by me insisted on, and in reporting

my arguments for it, pp. 8, 9. 12. in such a way and manner, as argues that he either never understood them, or is willing to pervert them. The true nature and importance of them I have before laid down, and shall not now again repeat; though I shall add, that his frequent repetition of his disproving that principle, which it appears, that he never yet contended withal, in its full strength, brings but little advantage to his cause, with persons whose interest doth not compel them to take up things on trust. How well he clears himself from the charge of reviling and using opprobrious reproachful terms, although he profess himself to have been astonished at the charge, may be seen in his justification of himself therein, pp. 16—19. with his reinforcing every particular expression instanced in; and yet he tells me, for inferring that he discovered sanguinary thoughts in reference unto them whose removal from their native soil into the wilderness, he affirms, England's happiness would have consisted in, that he 'hath much ado to forbear once more to say, The Lord rebuke thee:' for my part, I have received such a satisfactory taste of his spirit and way, that as I shall not from henceforth desire him to keep in any thing, that he can hardly forbear to let out, but rather to use his utmost liberty; so I must assure him, that I am very little concerned, or not at all, in what he shall be pleased to say, or to forbear for the time to come; himself hath freed me from that concernment.

The first particular of value insisted on, is his charge upon me for the denial of all the churches of England to be true churches of Christ, except the churches gathered in a congregational way. Having frequently and without hesitation charged this opinion upon me in his first answer, knowing it to be very false, I expostulated with him about it in my review. Instead of accepting the satisfaction tendered in my express denial of any such thought or persuasion, or tendering any satisfaction as to the wrong done me, he seeks to justify himself in his charge, and so persisteth therein. The reasons he gives for his so doing are not unworthy a little to be remarked.

The first is this; he 'supposed me to be an Independent,' and therefore made that charge: the consequent of which supposition is much too weak to justify this reverend author in his accusation. *Doth* he suppose that he may, without

offence, lay what he please to the chargeof an Independent? But he saith, secondly, that he 'took the word Independent, generally, as comprehending Brownists, and Anabaptists, and other sectaries.' But herein also he doth but delude his own conscience, seeing he personally speaks to me and to my design in that book of schism, which he undertook to confute; which also removes his third intimation, that he 'formerly intended any kind of independence,' &c. the rest that follow are of the same nature, and however compounded will not make a salve to heal the wound made in his reputation by his own weapon; for the learned author, called 'vox populi,' which he is pleased here to urge. I first question whether he be willing to be produced to maintain this charge; and if he shall appear, I must needs tell him (what he here questions whether it be so or no), that he is a very liar. For any principles in my treatise, whence a denial of their ministers and churches may be regularly deduced, let him produce them if he can, and if not, acknowledge that there had been a more Christian and ingenuous way of coming off an engagement into that charge, than that by him chosen to be insisted on; 'animos et iram ex crimine sumunt.' And again we have 'vox populi' cited on the like occasion, p. 34. about my refusal to answer whether I were a minister or not; which as the thing itself of such a refusal of mine on any occasion in the world (because it must be spoken), is 'purum putum mendacium,' so it is no truer, that, that was 'vox populi' at Oxford which is pretended; that which is 'vox populi,' must be public: 'publicum' was once 'populicum;' now setting aside the whispers, of it may be two or three Ardelio's, notorious triflers, whose lavish impertinency will deliver any man from the danger of being slandered by their tongues, and there will be little ground left for the report that is fathered on 'vox populi.' And I tell him here once again, which is a sufficient answer indeed to his whole first chapter, that I do not deny Presbyterian churches to be true churches of Jesus Christ, nor the ministers of them to be true ministers, nor do maintain a nullity in their ordination as to what is the proper use and end of salvation[b] (taking it in the sense wherein by them it is taken), though I think it neither administered by them in due order, nor to have in

[b] *Vid. Gerard. loc. Com. de Minist. Ecclesiast. sect. 11. 12.*

f that force and efficacy, singly considered, which by y of them is ascribed unto it. Thus much of my judg- t I have publicly declared long ago, and I thought I ht have expected from persons professing Christianity, they would not voluntarily engage themselves into an sition against me, and waving my judgment which I constantly published and preached, have gathered up rts from private and table discourses, most of them false untrue, all of them uncertain, the occasions and co- nces of those discourses from whence they have been d and taken being utterly lost, or at present by him lly omitted. His following excursions about a succes- ordination from Rome, wherein he runs cross to the most ent lights of all the reformed churches, and their de- d judgments, with practice in reordaining those who e unto them with that Roman stamp upon them, I shall farther interest myself in, nor think myself concerned so o, until I see a satisfactory answer given unto Beza and rs in this very point; and yet I must here again profess, I cannot understand that distinction of deriving ordina- from the church of Rome, but not from the Roman ch. Let him but seriously peruse these ensuing words Beza, and tell me whether he have any ground of a par- lar quarrel against me upon this account.

Sed præterea quænam ista est quæso ordinaria vocatio, n eos habuisse dicis, quos Deus paucis quibusdam ex- is, excitavit? Certe papistica. Nam hæc tua verba sunt; e si episcopi Gallicanarum ecclesiarum se et suas eccle- a tyrannide episcopi Romani vindicare velint, et eas ab i idololatria et superstitione repurgare, non habent opus vocatione ab ea quam habent. Quid ergo? Papisticas nationis, in quibus neque morum examen præcessit, le leges ullæ servatæ sunt inviolabiliter ex divino jure in ionibus et ordinationibus præscriptæ, in quibus puri n omnes canones impudentissime violati sunt: quæ nihil l sunt, quam fœdissima Romani prostibuli nundinatio, is meretricum mercede, quam Deus templo suo inferri ibuit, inquinatior: quibus denique alii non ad prædican- sed pervertendum evangelium: alii non ad docendum, sed ursus sacrificandum, et ad abominandum βδελυγμα sunt nati, usque adeo *firmas* tecum esse censebimus, ut quoties

tali cuipiam pseudoepiscopo, Deus concesserit ad verum Christianismum transire omnis illa istiusmodi ordinationis impuritas simul expurgata censeatur? Imo quia sic animum per Dei gratiam mutavit, quo ore, quo pudore, qua conscientia papismum quidem detestabitur, suam autem inordinatissimam ordinationem non ejurabit? aut si, ejuret, quomodo ex illius jure auctoritatem dicendi habebit. Nec tamen nego quin tales, si probe doctrinam veram tenere, si honestis moribus præditi, si ad gregem pascendum apti comperiantur, ex pseudoepiscopis novi pastores, legitime designentur.' Thus he, who was thought then to speak the sense of the churches of Geneva and France, in his book against Saravia about the divers orders of ministers in the church.

His plea for the church authority of the pope, notwithstanding his being an idolater, a murderer, the man of sin, an adversary of Christ, because a civil magistrate doth not by any moral crime or those whereof the pope is guilty, lose his jurisdiction and authority, considering the different principles, grounds, ends, laws, rules, privileges of the authority of the one and the other, and the several tenures whereby the one doth hold, and the other pretends to hold his power, is brought in to serve the turn in hand, and may be easily laid aside.

And when he shall manifest, that there is appointed by Christ, one single high-priest or prelate in the house of God the whole church; and that office to be confined to one nation, one blood, one family, propagated by natural generation, without any provision of relief by any other way, person, or family in case of miscarriage; and when he shall have proved that such an officer as the pope of Rome, in any one particular that constituteth him such an officer, was once instituted by Christ, I shall farther attend unto his reason for his authority from that of the high-priest's among the Jews, which was not lost as to its continuance in the family of Aaron, notwithstanding the miscarriage of some individual person vested therewithal. In the close of the chapter he reassumes his charge of my renouncing my own ordination, which with great confidence, and without the least scruple, he had asserted in his answer; of that assertion he now pretends to give the reasons, whereof the first is this:

1. 'The world looks on him as an Independent of the

highest note; therefore he hath renounced his ordination; and therefore I dare to say so. So much for that reason. I understand neither the logic nor morality of this first reason.

2. He knows from good hands that some of the brethren have renounced their ordination; therefore he durst say positively that I have renounced mine. Prov. xii. 18.

3. He hath heard that I dissuaded others from their ordination, and therefore he durst say I renounced my own; and yet I suppose he may possibly dissuade some from episcopal ordination: but I know it not, no more than he knows what he affirms of me which is false.

4. He concludes from the principles in my book of Schism; because I said that to insist upon a succession of ordination from antichrist and the beast of Rome would, if I mistake not, keep up in this particular what God would have pulled down, therefore I renounced my ordination; when he knows that I avowed the validity of ordination on another account.

5. If all this will not do, he tells me of something that was said at public meeting (at dinner it seems) with the canons of Christ Church, viz. that I valued not my ordination by the bishop of Oxford, any more than a crumb upon my trencher; which words whether ever they were spoken or no, or to what purpose, or in reference to what ordination (I mean of the two orders), or in what sense, or with what limitation, or as part of what discourse, or in comparison of what else, or whether solely in reference to the Roman succession, in which sense I will have nothing to do with it, I know not at all; nor will concern myself to inquire; being greatly ashamed to find men professing the religion of Jesus Christ, so far forgetful of all common rules of civility and principles of human society, as to insist upon such vain groundless reports as the foundations of accusations against their brethren! nor do I believe that any one of the reverend persons quoted will own this information; although I shall not concern myself to make inquiry into their memories concerning any such passage or discourse.

Much relief for the future against these and the like mistakes may be afforded from an easy observation of the different senses wherein the term of ordination is often used; it is one thing when it is taken largely for the whole appoint-

ment of a man to the ministry; in which sense I desire our author to consider what is written by Beza among reformed, and Gerhard among the Lutheran divines, to omit innumerable others; another thing when taken for the imposition of hands, whether by bishops or presbyters; concerning which single act, both as to its order and efficacy, I have sufficiently delivered my judgment, if he be pleased to take notice of it. I fear indeed that when men speak of an ordained ministry, which in its true and proper sense I shall with them contend for, they often relate only to that solemnity, restraining the authoritative making of ministers singly thereunto; contrary to the intention and meaning of that expression in Scripture, antiquity, and the best reformed divines, both Calvinists and Lutherans; and yet it is not imaginable how some men prevail by the noise and sound of that word, upon the prejudiced minds of partial unstudied men. A little time may farther manifest, if it be not sufficiently done already, that another account is given of this matter by Clemens, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Justin Martyr, and generally all the first writers of Christians; besides the councils of old and late, with innumerable Protestant authors of the best note, to the same purpose.

This I say is the ground of this mistake; whereas sundry things concur to the calling of ministers, as it belongs to the church of God, the ground and pillar of truth, the spouse of Christ, Psal. xlv. and mother of the family, or she that tarryeth at home, chap. lxviii. unto whom all ministers are stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1. even in the house of God, 1 Tim. iii. 15. and sundry qualifications are indispensably previously required in the persons to be called; overlooking the necessity of the qualifications required, and omitting the duty and authority of the church, Acts i. 15. vi. 2. xiii. 2. xiv. 22. the act of them who are not the whole church, Eph. iv. 11, 12. but only a part of it, 1 Cor. iii. 21. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3. as to ministry, consisting in the approbation and solemn confirmation of what is supposed to go before, hath in some men's language gotten the name of ordination, and an interpretation of that name to such an extent, as to inwrap in it all that is indispensably necessary to the constitution or making of ministers; so that where that is obtained, in what *order* soever, or by whomsoever administered, who have first

ned it themselves, there is a lawful and sufficient calling
e ministry. Indeed, I know no error about the insti-
as of Christ attended with more pernicious conse-
ces to the church of God than this, should it be prac-
according to the force of the principle itself. Suppose
ight, or ten men, who have themselves been formerly
ned, but now perhaps, not by any ecclesiastical cen-
but by an act of the civil magistrate, are put out of
places for notorious ignorance and scandal, should
r and ordain a hundred ignorant and wicked persons
themselves to be ministers; must they not on this
iple be all accounted ministers of Christ, and to be in-
d with all ministerial power; and so be enabled to
gate their kind to the end of the world; and indeed
should not this be granted, seeing the whole bulk of
papal ordination is contended for as valid; whereas it
toriously known, that sundry bishops among them (who
ps received their own ordination as the reward of a
e) being persons of vicious lives, and utterly ignorant of
gospel, did sustain their pomp and sloth, by selling holy
rs as they called them, to the scum and refuse of men;
of these things, more in their proper place.

ake then, reader, the substance of this chapter, in this
recapitulation.

. He denies our churches to be true churches, and our
sters true ministers.

. He hath renounced his own ordination.

. When some young men came to advise about their
sation he disuaded them from it.

. He saith he would maintain against all the ministers
England, there was in Scripture no such thing as ordi-
n.

. That when he was chosen a parliament-man he would
nswer whether he was a minister or not; all which are
riously untrue, and some of them, namely the two last,
emote from any thing to give a pretence or colour unto
, that I question whether Satan have impudence enough
n himself their author; and yet from hearsays, reports,
urs, from table talk, 'vox populi,' and such other
nds of reasoning, this reverend author hath made them
wn, and by such a charge hath, I presume, in the judg-

ment of all unprejudiced men, discharged me from farther attending to what he shall be prompted from the like principles to divulge, for the same end and purposes which hitherto he hath managed, for the future. For my judgment about their ministry and ordination, about the nature and efficacy of ordination, the state and power of particular churches, my own station in the ministry which I shall at all times, through the grace and assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ, freely justify against men and devils, it is so well known, that I shall not need here farther to declare it. For the true nature and notion of schism, alone by me inquired after in this chapter, as I said, I find nothing offered thereunto; only whereas I restrained the ecclesiastical use of the word schism to the sense wherein it is used in the places of Scripture that mention it with relation to church affairs, which that it ought not to be so, nothing but asseverations to the contrary are produced to evince; this is interpreted, to extend to all that I would allow as to the nature of schism itself, which is most false; though I said if I would proceed no farther, I might not be compelled so to do, seeing in things of this nature we may crave allowance to think and speak with the Holy Ghost: however, I expressly comprised in my proposition all the places wherein the nature of schism is delivered, under what terms or words soever. When then I shall be convinced, that such discourses as those of this treatise, made up of diversions into things wholly foreign to the inquiry by me insisted on, in the investigation of the true notion and nature of schism, with long talks about Anabaptists, Brownists, Sectaries, Independents, Presbyterians, ordination, with charges and reflections grounded on this presumption, that this author and his party (for we will no more contend about that expression) are 'in solidum' possessed of all true and orderly church-state in England, so that whosoever are not of them are schismatics, and I know not what besides, he being

——— Gallinæ filius albæ,
Nos viles pulli nati infelicibus ovis;

I shall farther attend unto them. I must farther add, that I was not so happy as to foresee that because I granted the Roman party before the reformation to have made outwardly a profession of the religion of Christ, although I expressed

m to be really a party combined together for all ends of kedness, and in particular for the extirpation of the true rch of Christ in the world, having no state of union but t the Holy Ghost calls Babylon, in opposition to Zion, reverend author would conclude as he doth, p. 34. that I wed them to be a true church of Christ; but it is im- sible for wiser men than I to see far into the issue of h discourses; and therefore we must take in good part t doth fall out; and if the reverend author, instead of ing his zeal warmed against me, would a little bestir his lities, to make out to the understandings and consciences uninterested men, that all ecclesiastical power being ted in the pope and councils, by the consent of that whole abination of men called the church of Rome, and flowing m the pope in its execution to all others; who, in the de- tion of it from him, owned him as the immediate foun- n of it, which they sware to maintain in him, and this in osition to all church-power in any other persons what- ver; it was possible that any power should be derived m that combination, but what came expressly from the ntain mentioned. I desire our author would consider the me of spirit that was in this matter, in them who first oured in the work of reformation, and to that end peruse stories of Lasitius and Regenuolscius about the churches Bohemia, Poland, and those parts of the world, especially latter from p. 29, 30. and forward. And as to the dis- ction used by some, between the papacy and the church Rome, which our author makes use of to another purpose n those did who first invented it (extending it only to consideration of the possibility of salvation for indivi- al persons living in that communion before the reforma- n), I hope he will not be angry if I profess my disability understand it. All men cannot be wise alike; if the pacy comprise the pope, and all papal jurisdiction and wer, with the subjection of men thereunto; if it denote all idolatries, false worship, and heresies of that society of n; I do know that all those are confirmed by church-acts that church: and that in the church public sense of that urch, no man was a member of it but by virtue of the ion that consisted in that papacy, it being placed always them in all their definitions of their church; as also that

there was neither church-order, nor church-power, nor church-act, nor church-confession, nor church-worship amongst them, but what consisted in that papacy.

Now because nothing doth more frequently occur than the objection of the difficulty in placing the dispensation of baptism on a sure foot account, in case of the rejection of all authoritative influence from Rome into the ministry of the reformed churches, with the insinuation of a supposition of the non-baptization of all such as derive not a title unto it by that means, they who do so being supposed to stand upon an unquestionable foundation, I shall a little examine the grounds of their security, and then compare them with what they have to plead who refuse to acknowledge the deriving any sap or nourishment from that rotten corrupt stock.

It is, I suppose, taken for granted, that an unbaptized person can never effectually baptize, let him receive what other qualifications soever that are to be superadded, or necessary thereunto. If this be not supposed, the whole weight of the objection improved by the worst supposition that can be made, falls to the ground. I shall also desire in the next place, that as we cannot make the popish baptism better than it is, so that we would not plead it to be better, or any other, than they profess it to be; nor pretend, that though it be rotten or null in the foundation, yet by continuance and time it might obtain validity and strength. When the claim is by succession from such a stock or root, if you suppose once a total intercision in the succession from that stock or root, there is an utter end put to that claim; let us now consider how the case is with them from whom this claim is derived.

1. It is notoriously known, that amongst them the validity of the sacraments depends upon the intention of the administrator: it is so with them, as to every thing they call a sacrament. Now, to take one step backwards, that baptism will by some of ours be scarce accounted valid, which is not administered by a lawful minister; suppose now that some pope ordaining a bishop in his stable to satisfy a whore, had not an intention to make him a bishop, which is no remote surmise; he being no bishop rightly ordained, all the priests by him afterward consecrated, were indeed no priests, and so indeed had no power to administer any sa-

ements, and so consequently the baptism that may lie, for ught we know, at the root of that which some of us pretend nto, was originally absolutely null and void, and could ever by tract of time be made valid or effectual, for like muddy fountain, the farther it goes, the more filthy it is: r suppose that any priest, baptizing one who afterwards me to be pope, from whom all authority in that church oth flow and is derived, had no intention to baptize him, hat will become of all that ensues thereon?

It is endless to pursue the uncertainties and entanglements that ensue on this head of account; and sufficiently ay to manifest, that whosoever resolves his interest in gosel privileges into this foundation, can have no assurance of ith, nay, nor tolerably probable conjecture that he is bapsed, or was ever made partaker of any ordinance of the ospel. Let them that delight in such troubled waters, port themselves in them: for my own part, considering the ate of that church for some years, if not ages, wherein the untains of all authority amongst them were full of filth and lood, their popes upon their own confession being made, t up, and pulled down at the pleasure of vile, impudent, ngineering strumpets, and supplying themselves with ofers all the world over of the same spirit and stamp with emselves, and that for the most part for hire, being in the ean time all idolaters to a man; I am not willing to grant, at their good and upright intention is necessary to be supsed as a thing requisite unto my interest in any privilege the gospel of Christ.

2. It is an ecclesiastical determination of irrefragable thority amongst them, that whosoever he be that admiisters baptism, so he use the matter and form, that bapm is good and valid and not to be reiterated: yea, pope icholas in his resolutions and determinations upon the inuiry of the Bulgarians, (whose decrees are authentic and corded in their counsels, tom. 2. Crab. p. 144.) declares the dgment of that church to the full: they tell him, that many their nation were baptized by an unknown person, a Jew a pagan, they knew not whether; and inquire of him, whe-er they were to be rebaptized or no; whereunto he answers: Si in nomine S. S. Trinitatis, vel tantum in Christi nomine, cut in Actis apostolorum legimus, baptizati sunt, unum

quippe idemque est, ut S. Ambrosius expressit, constat eos denuo non esse baptizandos:' if they were baptized in the name of the Trinity or of Christ, they are not to be baptized again. Let a blasphemous Jew or pagan do it, so it be done the work is wrought, grace conveyed, and baptism valid. The constant practice of women baptizing amongst them, is of the same import: and what doth Mr. Cawdrey think of this kind of baptism? Is it not worth the contending about, to place it in the derived succession of ours? who knows but that some of these persons, baptized by a counterfeit impostor, on purpose to abuse and defile the institutions of our blessed Saviour, might come to be baptizers themselves, yea, bishops or popes, from whom all ecclesiastical authority was to be derived; and what evidence or certainty can any man have, that his baptism doth not flow from this fountain?

3. Nay, upon the general account, if this be required as necessary to the administration of that ordinance, that he that doth baptize, be rightly and effectually baptized himself; who can in faith bring an infant to any to be baptized, unless he himself saw that person rightly baptized?

As to the matter of baptism then, we are no more concerned, than as to that of ordination: by what ways or means soever any man comes to be a minister according to the mind of Jesus Christ, by that way and means he comes to have the power for a due administration of that ordinance: concerning which state of things, our author may do well to consult Beza in the place mentioned. Many other passages there are in this chapter that might be remarked, and a return easily made according to their desert of untruth and impertinency; but the insisting on such things, looks more like children's playing at pushpin, than the management of a serious disputation: take an instance; p. 23. he seems to be much offended with my commending him; and tells me, as Jerome said of Ruffinus, 'I wrong him with praises;' when yet the utmost I say of him is, that I had received a better character of him, than he had given of himself in his book, p. 10. and that his proceeding was unbecoming his worth, gravity, and profession, p. 46. or so grave and reverend a person as he is reported to be, p. 121. wherein it seems I have transgressed the rule, *μήποτ' εὖ ἔρδειν γέροντα.*

The business of his second chapter is to make good his former charge of my inconstancy and inconsistency with myself as to my former and present opinions, which he had placed in the frontispiece of his other treatise. The impertinency of this chapter had been intolerable, but that the loose discourses of it are relieved by a scheme of my self-contradictions in the close. His design, he professeth, in his former discourse was not to blast my reputation, or to 'cause my person to suffer, but to prevent the prevalency of ay way by the authority of my person;' that is, it was not his intention, it was only his intention for such a purpose. I bless my God I have good security through grace, that whether he, or others like-minded with himself, intend any such thing or no, in those proceedings of his and theirs, which seemed to have in their own nature a tendency thereunto, my reputation shall yet be preserved in that state and condition, as is necessary to accompany me in the duties and works of my generation, that I shall through the hand of God be called out unto; and therefore, being prepared in some measure to go through good report and bad report, I shall give him assurance, that I am very little concerned in such attempts, from whatever intention they do proceed; only I must needs tell him, that he consulted not his own reputation with peaceable godly men, whatever else he omitted, in the ensuing comparing of me to the seducers in Jude, called wandering planets, for their inconstancy and inconsistency with themselves, according to the exposition that was needful for the present turn.

But seeing the scheme at the close must bear the weight of this charge, let us briefly see what it amounts unto; and whether it be a sufficient basis of the superstruction that is raised upon it: hence it is, that my inconsistency with myself must be remarked in the title-page of his first treatise; from hence must my authority (which what it is I know not) be impaired, and myself be compared to cursed apostates and seducers, and great triumph be made upon my self-inconsistency.

The contradictions pretended are taken out of two books, the one written in the year 1643, the other in 1656; and are as follow:

He spake of Rome as a collapsed, corrupted church-state, p. 40. [p. 46.]	He says, Rome we account no church at all, p. 156. [p. 190.]

'Crimen inauditum, C. Cæsar;' is it meet that any one should be tolerated, that is thus wofully inconsistent with himself? What! speak of Rome as a collapsed church in Italy, and within thirteen or fourteen years after to say, it is no church at all; well! though I may say there is indeed no contradiction between these assertions, seeing in the latter place I speak of Rome as that church is stated by themselves, when yet I acknowledge there may be corrupted churches both in Rome and Italy in the same treatise; yea, I do not find that in the place directed unto, I have in terms, or in just consequence at all granted the church of Rome to be a collapsed church: nay, the church of Rome is not once mentioned in the whole page, nor as such is spoken of: and what shall we think of this proceeding? But yet I will not so far offend against my sense of my own weakness, ignorance, and frailty, as to use any defensative against this charge; let it pass at any rate that any sober man freed from pride, passion, self-fulness and prejudice shall be pleased to put upon it;

——ὀδὲ ἱερῶν τοὺς νόμους
κἂν ἀκριβῶς, συνοφάντης φαίνεται.

But the second instance will make amends, and take more of the weight of this charge upon its shoulders: take it then as it lies in its triple column:

Gifts in the person, and consent of people, is warrant enough to make a man a preacher in an extraordinary case only; p. 15. and p. 40. [pp. 22. 46.]	Denying our ordination to be sufficient, he says he may have that which indeed constitutes him a minister, viz. gifts and submission by the people; p. 198. [p. 211.]	I am punctually of the same mind still, p. 40. [p. 22.] Ye had said in his first book, p. 46. [p 53.] as to formal teaching is required, 1. Gifts. 2. Authority from the church, if he do not equivocate.

I must confess I am here at a stand to find out the pretended contradiction; especially laying aside the word 'only' in the first column, which is his and not mine. By a preacher, in the first place, I intend a minister: gifts, and consent or submission of the people, I affirm in both places to be sufficient to constitute a man a minister in extraordinary cases; that is, when imposition of hands by a presbytery may be obtained in due order according to the appointment of Jesus Christ. That the consent and submission of the people, which include election, have nothing of authority in

a I never said: the superadded act of the imposition of ds by a presbytery, when it may be regularly obtained, lso necessary. But that there is any contradiction in words (although in truth they are not my words but an ne collection from them), or in this author's inference n them, or any colour of equivocation, I profess I cannot ern: in this place Mr. Cawdrey οὐκ ἴδεν, ἀλλ' ἐδόκησεν δι' νύκτα σελήνην. Pass we to the third.

made the union of Christ and be- s to be mystical, p. 21. [p. 27.]

He makes the union to be personal, pp. 94, 95. [p. 158.]

I wish our reverend author for his own sake had omitted instance; because I am enforced in my own necessary nce to let him know, that what he assigns to me in his nd column is notoriously false, denied and disproved e in the very place and treatise wherein I have handled doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit; and whether he hear or forbear, I cannot but tell him, that this kind of ing is unworthy his calling and profession. His following ctions and inferences, whereby he endeavours to give ntenance to this false and calumnious charge, arise from rance of the doctrine that he seeks to blemish and op- . Though the same Spirit dwell in Christ and us, he may have him in fulness, we in measure; fulness measure relating to his communication of graces and , which are arbitrary to him; indwelling to his person: the Spirit animates the catholic church, and is the au- of its spiritual life by a voluntary act of his power, as oul gives life to the body, by a necessary act, by virtue union; for life is 'actus vivificantis in vivificatum per sam utriusque,' is the common doctrine of divines. But he soul being united to the body, as 'pars essentialis ositi,' and the Spirit dwelling in the person as a free in- mnt, the union between Christ and the person is not of ame kind with the union of soul and body: let our or consult Zanchy on the second of the Ephesians, and ll not repent him of his labour; or if he please, an au- whom I find him often citing, namely, bishop Hall, t union with Christ. And for my concernment in this ge I shall subjoin the words from whence it must be n; p. 133. [vol. vi. p. 446.] of my book of Perseverance.

'1. The first signal issue and effect which is ascribed to this indwelling of the Spirit, is union; not a personal union with himself, which is impossible: he doth not assume our natures, and so prevent our personality, which would make us one person with him, but dwells in our persons, keeping his own, and leaving us our personality infinitely distinct; but it is a spiritual union, the great union mentioned so often in the gospel, that is the sole fountain of our blessedness, our union with the Lord Christ, which we have thereby.

Many thoughts of heart there have been about this union; what it is, wherein it doth consist, the causes, manner, and effects of it; the Scripture expresses it to be very eminent, near, durable, setting it out for the most part by similitudes and metaphorical illustrations, to lead poor weak creatures into some useful needful acquaintance with that mystery, whose depths in this life they shall never fathom. That many in the days wherein we live, have miscarried in their conceptions of it, is evident; some to make out their imaginary union have destroyed the person of Christ, and fancying a way of uniting man to God by him, have left him to be neither God nor man. Others have destroyed the person of believers, affirming that in their union with Christ, they lose their own personality, that is, cease to be men: or at least, those are these individual men.

'I intend not now to handle it at large, but only, and that I hope without offence, to give in my thoughts concerning it, as far as it receiveth light from, and relateth unto, what hath been before delivered concerning the indwelling of the Spirit, and that without the least contending about other ways of expression.' So far there; with much more to the purpose; and in the very place of my book of Schism, referred to by this author, I affirm, as the head of what I assert, that by the indwelling of the Spirit, Christ personal and his church do become one Christ mystical; 1 Cor. xii. 12. the very expression insisted on by him, in my former treatise; and so you have an issue of this self-contradiction, concerning which, though reports be urged for some other things, Mr. Cawdrey might have said what Lucian doth of his true history; γράφω τοίνυν περὶ ὧν μητ' εἶδον, μητ' ἔπαθον, μήτε παρ' ἄλλων ἐπυθόμην.

Let us then consider the fourth, which is thus placed:

1. In extraordinary cases every one that undertakes to preach the gospel must have an immediate call from God, p. 28. [p. 35.]	2. Yet required no more of before the gifts and consent of the people which are ordinary, and mediate calls, p. 15. [p. 22.] neither is here any need or use of an immediate call, p. 53. [p. 60.]	3. To assure a man that he is extraordinarily called, he gives three ways: 1. Immediate revelation; 2. Concurrence of Scripture rule; 3. Some outward acts of providence. The two last whereof are mediate calls, p. 30. [p 36.]

All that is here remarked and cast into three columns, I know not well why, is taken out of that one treatise of the Duty of Pastors and People. And could I give myself the least assurance that any one would so far concern himself in this charge, as to consult the places from whence the words are pretended to be taken, to see whether there be any thing in them to answer the cry that is made, I should spare myself the labour of adding any one syllable towards their vindication; and might most safely so do, there being not the least colour of opposition between the things spoken of. In brief, extraordinary cases are not all of one sort and nature; in some an extraordinary call may be required, in some not. Extraordinary calls are not all of one kind and nature neither; some may be immediate from God, in the ways there by me described; some calls may be said to be extraordinary, because they do in some things come short of, or go beyond the ordinary rule that ought to be observed in well constituted churches. Again, concurrence of Scripture rules and acts of outward providence, may be such sometimes as are suited to an ordinary, sometimes to an extraordinary call; all which are at large unfolded in the places directed unto by our author, and all laid in their own order, without the least shadow of contradiction. But it may sometimes be said of good men as the satyrist said of evil women; 'fortem animum præstant rebus quas turpiter audent.' Go we to the next:

1. The church government from which I desire not to wander is the presbyterial.	2. He now is engaged in the independent way.	3. Is settled in that way which he is ready to maintain, and knows it will be found his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

'Hinc mihi sola mali labes:' This is that inexpiable crime that I labour under; an account of this whole business I have given in my Review; so that I shall not here trouble the reader with a repetition of what he is so little

concerned in. I shall only add, that whereas I suppose Mr. Cawdrey did subscribe unto the three articles at his ordination; were it of any concernment to the church of God, or the interest of truth, or were it a comely and a Christian part to engage in such a work, I could manifest contradictions between what he then solemnly subscribed to, and what he hath since written and preached, manifold above what he is able to draw out of this alteration of my judgment. Be it here then declared, that whereas I sometimes apprehended the presbyterial synodical government of churches, to have been fit to be received and walked in (then, when I knew not but that it answered those principles which I had taken up, upon my best inquiry into the word of God), I now profess myself to be satisfied that I was then under a mistake; and that I do now own, and have for many years lived in the way and practice of that called congregational. And for this alteration of judgment, of all men, I fear least a charge from them, or any of them, whom within a few years we saw reading the service-book in their surplices, &c. against which things they do now inveigh and declaim. What influence the perusal of Mr. Cotton's book of the Keys had on my thoughts in this business I have formerly declared. The answer to it (I suppose that written by himself) is now recommended to me by this author, as that which would have perhaps prevented my change; but I must needs tell him, that as I have perused that book, many years ago, without the effect intimated, so they must be things written with another frame of spirit, evidence of truth, and manner of reasoning, than any I can find in that book, that are likely for the future to lay hold upon my reason and understanding. Of my settlement in my present persuasion I have not only given him an account formerly, but with all Christian courtesy, tendered myself in a readiness personally to meet him, to give him the proofs and reasons of my persuasions; which he is pleased to decline and return in way of answer, That I complimented him after the mode of the times; when no such thing was intended. And therefore my words of 'desiring liberty to wait upon him,' are expressed, but the end and purpose for which it was desired, are concealed in an &c. But he adds another instance:

Men ought not to cut themselves from the communion of the church, to rent the body of Christ, and break the sacred bond of charity; p. 48. [p. 55.]

2. He says, separation is no schism, nor schism any breach of charity; pp. 48, 49. [pp. 135, 136.]

There is not one word in either of these cautions, that I do not still own and allow, p. 44. [p. 278.] sure not without equivocation.

I have before owned this caution, as consistent with my present judgment, as expressed in my book of Schism, and as it is indeed: wherein lies the appearance of contradiction I am not able to discern. Do not I in my book of Schism, declare and prove, that men ought not to cut themselves from the communion of the church; that they ought not to rent the body of Christ, that they ought not to break the sacred bonds of charity? Is there any word or tittle in the whole discourse deviating from these principles? How and in what sense separation is not schism, that the nature of schism doth not consist in a breach of charity, the treatise instanced will so far declare, as withal to convince those that shall consider what is spoken, that our author scarce keeps close either to truth or charity in his framing of this contradiction. The close of the scheme lies thus:

I conceive they ought not at all to be allowed the benefit of private meeting, who wilfully abstain from the public congregations.

As for liberty to be allowed to those that meet in private, I confess myself to be otherwise minded.

I remember that about fifteen years ago, meeting occasionally with a learned friend, we fell into some debate about the liberty that began then to be claimed by men, differing from what had been, and what was then likely to be established; having at that time made no farther inquiry into the grounds and reasons of such liberty, than what had occurred to me in the writings of the remonstrants, all whose plea was still pointed towards the advantage of their own interest, I delivered my judgment in opposition to the liberty pleaded for, which was then defended by my learned friend. Not many years after, discoursing the same difference with the same person, we found immediately that we had changed stations, I pleading for an indulgence of liberty, he for restraint; whether that learned and worthy person be of the same mind still that then he was, or no, directly I know not. But this I know, that if he be not, considering

the compass of circumstances that must be taken in, to settle a right judgment in this case of liberty, and what alterations influencing the determination of this case we have had of late in this nation, he will not be ashamed to own his change; being a person who despises any reputation, but what arises from the embracing and pursuit of truth: my change I here own; my judgment is not the same in this particular, as it was fourteen years ago; and in my change I have good company, whom I need not to name. I shall only say my change was at least twelve years before the petition and advice; wherein the parliament of the three nations is come up to my judgment. And if Mr. Cawdrey hath any thing to object to my present judgment, let him at his next leisure consider the treatise that I wrote in the year 1648, about Toleration, where he will find the whole of it expressed. I suppose he will be doing, and that I may almost say of him, as Polycteutus did of Speusipus, τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι ἡσυχιάν ἄγειν ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης ἐν πεντασυρίγνω νόσω δεδεμένον. And now, Christian reader, I leave it to thy judgment whether our author had any just cause, of all his outcries, of my inconstancy and self-contradiction; and whether it had not been advisable for him to have passed by this seeming advantage of the design he professed to manage, rather than to have injured his own conscience and reputation to so little purpose.

Being sufficiently tired with the consideration of things of no relation to the cause at first proposed (but, this saith he, this the Independents, this the Brownists and Anabaptists, &c.) I shall now only inquire after that which is set up in opposition to any of the principles of my treatise of Schism before mentioned, or any of the propositions of the syllogisms wherein they are comprised, at the beginning of this discourse; remarking in our way some such particular passages, as it will not be to the disadvantage of our reverend author to be reminded of. Of the nature of the thing inquired after, in the third chapter I find no mention at all; only he tells me by the way, that the Doctor's assertion that my book about Schism, was one great schism, was not nonsense, but usual rhetoric, wherein profligate sinners may be called by the name of sin; and therefore a

book about schism, may be called a schism. I wish our author had found some other way of excusing his doctor, than by making it worse himself.

In the fourth chapter he comes to the business itself; and if in passing through that, with the rest that follow, I can fix on any thing rising up with any pretence of opposition to what I have laid down, it shall not be omitted; for things by myself asserted, or acknowledged on all hands, or formerly ventilated to the utmost, I shall not again trouble the reader with them; such are the positions about the general nature of schism, in things natural and political, antecedently considered to the limitation and restriction of it to its ecclesiastical use; the departure from churches voluntary or compelled, &c. all which were stated in my first treatise, and are not directly opposed by our author; such also is that doughty controversy he is pleased to raise and pursue about the seat and subject of schism, with its restriction to the instituted worship of God, pp. 18, 19. so placed by me, to distinguish the schism whereof we speak, from that which is natural, as also from such differences and breaches as may fall out amongst men, few or more, upon civil and rational accounts, all which I exclude from the enjoyment of any room or place in our consideration of the true nature of schism in its limited ecclesiastical sense. The like also may be affirmed concerning the ensuing strife of words about separation and schism; as though they were, in my apprehension of them, inconsistent; which is a fancy no better grounded than sundry other, which our reverend author is pleased to make use of. His whole passage also receives no other security, than what is afforded to it by turning my universal proposition into a particular; what I say of all places in the Scripture where the name or thing of schism is used in an ecclesiastical sense, as relating to a gospel church, he would restrain to that one place of the Corinths, where alone the word is used in that sense. However, if that one place be all, my proposition is universal; take then my proposition in its extent and latitude, and let him try once more if he please, what he hath to object to it, for as yet I find no instance produced to alleviate its truth. He much also insists, that there may be a separation in a church where there is no separation from a church, and saith

this was at first by me denied: that it was denied by me he cannot prove; but that the contrary was proved by me is evident to all impartial men, that have considered my treatise; although I cannot allow that the separation in the church of Corinth was carried to that height as is by him pretended; namely, as to separate from the ordinances of the Lord's supper; their disorder and division about and in its administration are reproved, not their separation from it: only on that supposition made, I confess I was somewhat surprised with the delivery of his judgment in reference to many of his own party, whom he condemns of schism for not administering the Lord's supper to all the congregation, with whom they pray and preach. I suppose the greatest part of the most godly and able ministers of the presbyterian way in England and Scotland, are here cast into the same condition of schismatics with the Independents. And the truth is, I am not yet without hopes of seeing a fair coalescency in love and church-communion, between the reforming Presbyterians and Independents; though for it they shall with some suffer under the unjust imputation of schism.

But it is incredible to think whither men will suffer themselves to be carried 'studio partium;' and ἀμετρία ἀνθολκῆς; hence have we the strange notions of this author about schism; decays in grace are schism, and errors in the faith are schism; and schism and apostacy are things of the same kind, differing only in degree; because the one leads to the other; as one sin of one kind doth often to another; drunkenness to whoredom, and envy and malice to lying; that differences about civil matters, like that of Paul and Barnabas, are schism; and this by one blaming me for a departure from the sense of antiquity, unto which these insinuations are so many monsters. Let us then proceed.

That Acts xiv. 4. xix. 9. 18. are pertinently used to discover and prove the nature of schism in an evangelically ecclesiastical sense, or were ever cited by any of the ancients to that purpose, I suppose our author on second consideration will not affirm. I understand not the sense of this argument, 'the multitude of the city was divided, and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostle,' therefore schism in a gospel church-state, is not only a division in a church; *or that it is* a separation into new churches, or that it is some-

thing more than the breach of the union appointed by Christ in an instituted church; much less doth any thing of this nature appear from Paul's separating the disciples whom he had converted to the faith from the unbelieving hardened Jews, an account whereof is given us, Acts xix. 9. So then, that in this chapter there is any thing produced 'de novo' to prove that the precise Scripture notion of schism in its ecclesiastical sense, extends itself any farther than differences, divisions, separations in a church, and that a particular church, I find not; and do once more desire our author, that if he be otherwise minded, to spare such another trouble to ourselves and others, as that wherein we are now engaged, he would assign me some time and place to attend him for the clearing of the truth between us.

Of schism, Acts xx. 30. Heb. x. 28. Jude 19. there is no mention; nor are those places interpreted of any such thing by any expositors, new or old, that ever I yet saw; nor can any sense be imposed on them inwrapping the nature of schism with the least colour or pretence of reason.

But now by our author, schism and apostacy are made things of one kind, differing only in degrees, p. 107. so confounding schism and heresy, contrary to the constant sense of all antiquity. Acts xx. 30. the apostle speaks of men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples; that is, teaching them false doctrines, contrary to the truths wherein they had been by him instructed; in his revealing unto them 'the whole counsel of God;' ver. 27. This by the ancients is called heresy, and is contradistinguished unto schism by them constantly: so Austin a hundred times. To draw men from the church, by drawing them into pernicious errors, false doctrine, being the cause of their falling off, is not schism, nor so called in Scripture, nor by any of the ancients, that ever yet I observed. That the design of the apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is to preserve and keep them from apostacy unto Judaism, besides that it is attested by a cloud of witnesses, is too evident from the thing itself to be denied. Chap. x. 25. he warns them of a common entrance into that fearful condition, which he describes, ver. 26. their neglect of the Christian assemblies, was the door of their apostacy to Judaism. What is this to schism? would *we charge a man with* that crime whom we saw neg-

lecting our assemblies, and likely to fall into Judaism? are there not more forcible considerations to deal with him upon? and doth not the apostle make use of them? Jude 19. hath been so far spoken unto already, that it may not fairly be insisted on again. 'Parvas habet spes Troja, si tales habet.'

In the entrance of the fifth chapter he takes advantage from my question, p. 147. [p. 323.] 'Who told him that raising causeless differences in a church, and then separating from it, is not in my judgment schism?' when the first part of the assertion, included in that interrogation, expresseth the formal nature of schism, which is not destroyed, nor can any man be exonerated of its guilt, by the subsequent crime of separation, whereby it is aggravated. 1 John ii. 19. is again mentioned to this purpose of schism, to as little purpose; so also is Heb. x. 25. both places treat of apostates, who are charged and blamed under other terms than that of schism. There is in such departures, as in every division whatever, of that which was in union, somewhat of the general nature of schism: but that particular crime and guilt of schism in its restrained ecclesiastical sense, is not included in them.

In his following discourse he renews his former charges of denying their ordinances and ministry, of separating from them, and the like; as to the former part of this charge I have spoken in the entrance of this discourse; for the latter, of separating from them, I say we have no more separated from them, than they have from us; our right to the celebration of the ordinances of God's worship, according to the light we have received from him, is in this nation as good as theirs; and our plea from the gospel we are ready to maintain against them, according as we shall at any time be called thereunto. If any of our judgment deny them to be churches, I doubt not but he knows who comes not behind in returnal of charges on our churches. Doth the reverend author think or imagine, that we have not in our own judgment more reason to deny their churches, and to charge them with schism, though we do neither, than they have to charge us therewith, and to deny our churches? Can any thing be more fondly pretended than that he hath proved that we have separated from them; upon which, p. 105, he requires the performance of my promise to retreat from the state *wherein* I stand, upon the establishment of such proof?

Hath he proved the due administration of ordinances amongst them whom he pleads for? Hath he proved any church-mion between them as such, and us? Hath he proved us to ave broken that union? What will not self-fulness and pre-udice put men upon?

How came they unto the sole possession of all church-tate in England; so that whoever is not of them, and with hem, must be charged to have separated from them? Mr. 'awdrey says, indeed, that the episcopal men and they agree substantials, and differ only in circumstantials; but that ey and we differ in substantials; but let him know they dmit not of his compliances; they say he is a schismatic, nd that all his party are so also; let him answer their harge solidly upon his own principles, and not think to wn that which he hath the weakest claim imaginable unto, nd was never yet in possession of. We deny that since the ospel came into England, the presbyterian government as y them stated, was ever set up in England, but in the wills f a party of men; so that here as yet, unless as it lies in rticular congregations, where our right is as good as theirs, one have separated from it, that I know of; though many nnot consent unto it. The first ages we plead ours, the llowing were unquestionably episcopal.

In the beginning of chapter the sixth, he attempts to sprove my assertion, that the union of the church catholic sible, which consists in the professing of the saving doctrine the gospel, &c. is broken only by apostacy. To this d he confounds apostacy and schism, affirming them only differ in degrees; which is a new notion unknown to an-quity, and contrary to all sound reason: by the instances produceth to this purpose he endeavours to prove that ere are things which break this union, whereby this union not broken; whilst a man continues a member of that urch which he is by virtue of the union thereof, and his terest therein, by no act doth he, or can he break that nion.

The partial breach of that union which consists in the ofession of the truth, is error and heresy and not schism. ur author abounds here in new notions which might easily discovered to be as fond, as new, were it worth while to nsider *them; of which* in brief, before. Only I wonder

why giving way to such thoughts as these, he should speak of men with contempt under the name of notionists, as he doth of Dr. Du Moulin; but the truth is, the doctor hath provoked him, and were it not for some considerations that are obvious to me, I should almost wonder, why this author should sharpen his leisure and zeal against me, who scarce ever publicly touched the grounds and foundations of that cause which he hath so passionately espoused, and pass by him, who both in Latin and English, hath laid his axe to the very root of it, upon principles sufficiently destructive to it, and so apprehended, by the best learned in our author's way, that ever these nations brought forth; but, as I said, reasons lie at hand, why it was more necessary to give me this opposition; which yet hath not altered my resolution, of handling this controversy in another manner, when I meet with another manner of adversary.

Page 110. he fixes on the examination of a particular passage about the disciples of John, mentioned Acts xix. 2. of whom I affirmed, that it is probable they were rather ignorant of the miraculous dispensations of the Holy Ghost, than of the person of the Holy Ghost; alleging to the contrary, that the words are more plain and full than to be so eluded, and for aught appears, John did not baptize into the name of the Holy Ghost. I hope the author doth not so much dwell at home, as to suppose this to be a new notion of mine; who almost of late in their critical notes have not either (at least) considered it, or confirmed it? neither is the question into whose name they were expressly baptized, but in what doctrine they were instructed. He knows who denies that they were at all actually baptized, before they were baptized by Paul. Nor ought it to be granted without better proof than any as yet hath been produced, that any of the saints under the Old Testament, were ignorant of the being of the Holy Ghost; neither do the words require the sense by him insisted on: ἀλλ' οὐδε, εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγίον ἐστιν, ἠκούσαμεν, do no more evince the person of the Holy Ghost to be included in them, than in those other, John vii. 39. οὔπω ἦν πνεῦμα ἅγιον; the latter in the proper sense he will not contend for; nor can, therefore, the expression being uniform, reasonably for the latter. Speaking of men openly and notoriously wicked, and denying them to be members of any church whatever, he bids

me answer his arguments to the contrary from the 1 Cor. v. 7. 2 Thess. xiii. 17. and I cannot but desire him that he would impose that task on them that have nothing else to do; for my own part, I shall not entangle myself with things to so little purpose. Having promised my reader to attend only to that which looks toward the merit of the cause, I must crave his pardon, that I have not been able to make good my resolution: meeting with so little or nothing at all which is to that purpose, I find myself entangled in the old diversions that we are now plentifully accustomed unto; but yet I shall endeavour to recompense this loss, by putting a speedy period to this whole trouble, despairing of being able to tender him any other satisfaction, whilst I dwell on this discourse. In the mean time, to obviate all strife of words if it be possible for the future, I shall grant this reverend author that in the general large notion of schism which his opposition to that insisted on by me hath put him upon, I will not deny but that he and I are both schismatics, and any thing else shall be so, that he would have to be so, rather than to be engaged in this contest any farther. In this sense he affirms, that there was a schism between Paul and Barnabas, and so one of them at least was a schismatic; as also he affirms the same of two lesser men, though great in their generation, Chrysostom and Epiphanius; so error and heresy, if he please, shall be schism from the catholic church, and scandal of life shall be schism. And his argument shall be true, that schism is a breach of union in a church of Christ's institution; therefore, in that which is so only by call, not to any end of joint worship as such, of any union; that which consists in the profession of the saving truths of the gospel, and so there may be a schism in the catholic church; and so those Presbyterians that reform their congregations, and do not administer the sacraments to all promiscuously, shall be guilty of schism; and, indeed, as to me, what else he pleaseth, for my inquiry concerns only the precise limited nature of schism, in its evangelically ecclesiastical sense.

Neither shall I at present (allotting very few hours to the dispatch of this business, which yet I judge more than it deserves) consider the scattered ensuing passages about ordination, church-government, number of elders, and the like, which all men know not at all to belong unto the main con-

troversy which was by me undertaken; and that they were against all laws of disputation, plucked violently into this contest by our reverend author. One thing I cannot pass by, and it will upon the matter put a close to what I shall at present offer to this treatise; having said that Christ hath given no direction for the performance of any duty of worship of sovereign institution, but only in them and by them (meaning particular churches), he answers, that, 'if I would imply that a minister in or of a particular church may perform those ordinances without those congregations, he contradicts himself for saying a particular church is the seat of all ordinances:' but why so, I pray? may not a particular church be the seat of all ordinances subjectively, and yet others be the object of them, or of some of them? But, saith he, 'if he mean those ordinances of worship are to be performed only by a minister of a particular congregation, what shall become of the people?' I suppose they shall be instructed and built up according to the mind of Christ; and what would people desire more? But whereas he had before said, that I denied 'a minister to be a minister to more than his own church;' and I had asked him 'who told him so;' adding that explication of my judgment, that for 'so much as men are appointed the objects of the dispensation of the word, I grant a minister in the dispensation of it to act ministerially, towards not only the members of the catholic church, but the visible members of the world also in contradistinction thereunto;' he now tells me a story of passages between the learned Dr. Wallis and myself, about his question in the Vespers, 1654, namely, that as to that question, 'An potestas ministri evangelici ad unius tantum ecclesiæ particularis membra extendatur?' I said, that Dr. Wallis had brought me a challenge, and that if I did dispute on that question, I must dispute 'ex animo;' although I grant that a minister, as a minister, may preach the word to more than those of his own congregation, yet knowing the sense wherein the learned Dr. Wallis maintained that question, it is not impossible, but I might say, if I did dispute I must do it 'ex animo:' for his bringing me a challenge, I do not know that either he did so, or that I put that interpretation on what he did; but I shall crave leave to say, that if the learned Dr. Wallis *do find* any ground or occasion to bring a challenge unto me,

debate any point of difference between us, I shall not wave swering his desire, although he should bring Mr. Cawdrey his second: for the present I shall only say, that as it is commendation to the moderation or ingenuity of any one atever, thus to publish to the world private hearsays, and at he hath been told of private conferences; so if I would ist on the same course, to make publication of what I have n told hath been the private discourse of some men, it is unlikely that I should occasion their shame and trouble: in this course of proceeding a progress is made out in the uing words; and Mr. Stubbes (who is now called my anuensis, who some five years ago, transcribed about a et of paper for me, and not one line before or since) is said e employed, or at least encouraged by me to write against learned Dr. Wallis, his Thesis being published; this is as e as much of that that went before, and as somewhat of t that follows after; and whereas it is added, that I said at he had written on that subject, was a scurrilous ridicu- s piece, it is of the same nature with the rest of the like orts. I knew that Mr. Stubbes was writing on that sub- t, but not until he had proceeded far in it; I neither em- yed him, nor encouraged him in it, any otherwise than consideration of his papers, after he had written them, y be so interpreted; and the reason why I was not willing should proceed, next to my desire of continuance of peace this place, was his using such expressions of me, and ne things of mine, in sundry places of his discourse, as I ld not modestly allow to be divulged; the following words the same purpose with them before mentioned, I remem- r not; nor did ever think to be engaged in the considera- n of such transgressions of the common rules of human iety as those now passed through; reports, hearsays, ks, private discourse between friends, allegations counte- nced by none of these, nor any thing else, are the weapons erewith I am assaulted. 'I have heard, I am told, if re- rts be true, it was 'vox populi' at Oxford, is it not so, I sume he will not deny it,' are the ornaments of this dis- rse: strange! that men of experience and gravity should carried by the power of these temptations not only to the getfulness of the royal law of Christ, and all gospel rule of portment *towards his* professed disciples; but also be

engaged into ways and practices contrary to the dictates of the law of nature, and such as sundry heathens would have abhorred. For my own part, had not God by his providence placed me in that station, wherein others also that fear him are concerned in me, I should not once turn aside to look upon such heaps as that which I have now passed over: my judgment in most heads and articles of Christian religion is long since published to the world, and I continue through the grace and patience of God preaching in public answerably to the principles I do profess; and if any man shall oppose what I have delivered, or shall so deliver, in print or the pulpit, or in divinity lectures, as my judgment, I shall consider his opposition, and do therein as God shall guide: with evil surmises, charges upon hearsays, and reports, attended with perpetual excursions upon the argument in hand, I shall no more contend.

Some few observations on scattered passages, will now speedily issue this discourse. Page 112. to that assertion of mine, that 'if Rome be no particular church, it is no church at all, for the catholic church it is not,' he replies, that 'though it be not such a particular congregation as I intend, yet it may be a particular patriarchal church:' but, 1. Then it seems it is a particular church, which grants my inference.

2. It was a particular church of Christ's institution that I inquired after: doth our author think that Christ hath appointed any patriarchal church? a patriarchal church, as such, is such from its relation to a patriarch; and he can scarce be thought to judge patriarchs to be of divine institution, who hath cast off and abjured episcopacy.

The Donatists are mentioned again, p. 113. And I am again charged with an attempt to vindicate them from schism; my thoughts of them I have before declared to the full, and have no reason to retract any thing from what was then spoken, or to add any thing thereunto; if it may satisfy our author, I here grant they were schismatics, with what aggravations he pleaseth, and wherein their schism consisted I have also declared: but he says, I undertake to exempt some others from schism (I know whom), that suffer with them in former and after ages, under the same imputation; I do so, indeed, and I suppose our author may guess at whom *I intend*; himself amongst others. I hope he is not so taken

in his thoughts with charging schism on others, as to rget that many, the greatest part and number of the true urches of Christ do condemn him for a schismatic; a Do-tistical schismatic: I suppose he acknowledges the church Rome to be a true church; the Lutheran I am persuaded will not deny, nor perhaps the Grecian, to be so. The iscopal church of England he contends for; and yet all se with one voice cry out upon him for a schismatic: and to the plea of the last, how he can satisfy his conscience, to the rejection of his lawful superiors, upon his own prin-ples, without pretending any such crime against them, as e Donatists did against Cæcilianus, I profess I do not derstand. New mention is made of episcopal ordination, . 120. and they are said to have had their successive or-nation from Rome who ordained therein: so indeed some y, and some otherwise; whether they had or no is nothing me, I lay no weight upon it; they held, I am sure, that ace in England, that without their approbation no man uld publicly preach the gospel: to say they were presby-rs, and ordained as presbyters, I know not what satisfac-on can arise unto conscience thereby. Party and argu-ent may be countenanced by it; they profess they ordained bishops, that for their lives and souls they durst not or-ain but as such; so they told those whom they ordained, d affirm they have open injury done them by any one's mial of it. As it was, the best is to be made of it: this ift is not handsome; nor is it ingenuous, for any one that th looked into antiquity, to charge me with departing from eir sense in the notion of schism, declared about the third d fourth ages, and at the same time to maintain an equa-y between bishops and presbyters; or to say, that bishops dained as presbyters, not as bishops: nor do I understand e excellency of that order which we see in some churches, here they have two sorts of elders; the one made so by or-nation without election, and the other by election without dination; those who are ordained, casting off all power and thority of them that ordained them; and those who are ected, immediately rejecting the greatest part of those that ose them.

Nor did I, as is pretended, plead for their presbyterian ay in the year 46; all the ministers, almost, in the county

of Essex, know the contrary; one especially, who being a man of great ability, and moderation of spirit, and for his knowledge in those things, not behind any man, I know, in England of his way, with whom in that year, and the next following, I had sundry conferences at public meetings of ministers, as to the several ways of reformation then under proposal. But the frivolousness of these imputations hath been spoken of before, as also the falseness of the calumny which our author is pleased to repeat again, about my turning from ways in religion.

My description of a particular church he once more blames as applicable to the catholic church invisible, and to the visible catholic church (I suppose he means as such), when a participation in the same ordinances numerically, is assigned as its difference: he asks, Whether it becomes my ingenuity, to interpret the capability of a church's reduction to its primitive constitution, by its own fitness and capacity to be so reduced, rather than by its external hinderances or furtherances; but with what ingenuity or modesty that question is asked, I profess I understand not: and, p. 134. he hath this passage (only I take notice of his introduction, to his answer, with thanks for the civility of the inquiry in the manner of its expression): 'My words were these: Whether our reverend author do not in his conscience think there was no true church in England till, &c. which puts me into suspicion that the reverend doctor was offended that I did not always (for oft I do) give him that title, of the reverend author, or the doctor, which made him cry out he was never so dealt withal by any party as by me; though upon review, I do not find that I gave him any uncivil language, unbeseeming me to give or him to receive; and I hear that somebody hath dealt more uncivilly with him in that respect, which he took very ill.'

Let this reverend author make what use of it he please, I cannot but again tell him, that these things become neither him nor any man professing the religion of Jesus Christ, or that hath any respect to truth or sobriety. Can any man think, that in his conscience, he gives any credit to the insinuation which here he makes, that I should thank him for calling me 'reverend author,' or 'reverend doctor,' or be troubled for his *not using* those expressions? Can the mind of an honest

an be thought to be conversant with such mean and low thoughts? for the title of reverend, I do give him notice that I have very little valued it ever since I have considered the saying of Luther; 'Nunquam periclitatur religio nisi inter reverendissimos.' So that he may as to me forbear it for the future, and call me as the Quakers do, and it shall suffice. And for that of doctor, it was conferred on me by the university in my absence, and against my consent, as they have expressed it under their public seal; nor doth any thing but gratitude and respect unto them, make me once own it; and freed from that obligation, I should never use it more, nor did I use it until some were offended with me, and blamed me for my neglect of them. And for that other whom he mentions, who before this gave so far place to indignation as to insinuate some such thing, I doubt not but by this time he hath been convinced of his mistake therein, being a person of another manner of ability and worth, than some others with whom I have to do: and the truth is, my manner of dealing with him in my last reply, which I have since myself not so well approved of, requires the passing by such returns. But you will say, then why do I preface this discourse with that expression, 'with thanks for the civility of the inquiry in the manner of its expression?' I say, this will discover the iniquity of this author's procedure in this particular: his inquiry was, 'Whether I did not in my conscience think that there were no true churches in England, until the Brownists our fathers, the Anabaptists our elder brothers, and ourselves arose, and gathered new churches;' without once taking notice, or mentioning his titles that he says he gave me, I used the words, in a sense obvious to every man's first consideration, as a reproof of the expressions mentioned; that which was the true cause of my words our author hides in an &c.: that which was not by me once taken notice of, is by him expressed to serve an end of drawing forth an evil surmise and suspicion, that hath not the least colour to give it countenance. Passing by all indifferent readers, I refer the honesty of this dealing with me, to the judgment of his own conscience; setting down what I neither expressed, nor took notice of, nor had any singular occasion in that place so to do, the words being often used by him, hiding and concealing what I did take notice of and

express, and which to every man's view was the occas
that passage, that conclusion or unworthy insinuati
made, which a good man ought to have abhorred.

Sundry other particulars there are, partly fals
calumniating, partly impertinent, partly consisting in
takes, that I thought at the first view to have made me
of; but on several accounts, I am rather willing here t
an end to the reader's trouble and my own.

TWO QUESTIONS

CONCERNING THE

POWER OF THE SUPREME MAGISTRATE

ABOUT

LIGION AND THE WORSHIP OF GOD,

WITH

ONE ABOUT TITHES,

PROPOSED AND RESOLVED.

Unto the Questions sent me last night, I pray accept of the ensuing Answer, under the title of Two Questions concerning the Power of the Supreme Magistrate about Religion and the Worship of God; with one about Tithes, proposed and resolved.

QUESTION I.

'WHETHER the supreme magistrate in a nation or commonwealth of men professing the religion of Jesus Christ, may or ought to exert his power legislative and executive, for the supportment, preservation, and furtherance of the profession of the faith and worship of God; and whether he may and ought to forbid, coerce, or restrain such principles and practices as are contrary to them, and destructive of them?'

The affirmative of both the parts of this question is proved,

I. From the light and law of nature.

For,

1. That there is a God.

2. That this God ought to be believed in, and worshipped according to the revelation that he makes of himself.

3. That it is incumbent on his worshippers in their several capacities, to defend and further that worship which answers the light and knowledge they have of him.

4. That to revile, or blaspheme this God, or his name, is an evil to be punished by them who have 'jus puniendi,' or the right of restraint in them, or committed unto them;

Are all dictates of the law of nature, principles inseparable from that light which is natural, and necessary unto rational creatures, subsisting in a moral dependence on God, and confirmed by Scripture; Heb. xi. 6. Exod. xxii. 28.

To assert then that the supreme magistrate, as such, in any nation, ought not to exert his authority for the ends, and in the way inquired after, is contrary to the light and law of nature.

II. From the law of nations.

For,

1. The due and regular improvement of common natural notions, and inbred principles, unto universal public good, is the law of nations, whose general foundation is laid, Gen. ix. 5, 6.

2. The constant usage of mankind in their political societies, answerable unto right reason, is the revealer or discoverer of this law of nations.

3. This law is an evidence and presumption of truth and right, paramount unto, and uncontrollable by, any thing but express revelation; or it is a discovery of the will of God, less than, and subordinate unto, no way but that of immediate revelation.

4. The wilful breach or contempt of this law, in its allotments or assignation of bounds to the interests and concernments of men, is generally esteemed the most righteous ground of one nation's waging war upon another.

5. That the supreme magistrate in each commonwealth, ought to exert his power and authority for the supportment, preservation, and furtherance of the worship of God, and to coerce and restrain that which would ruin it, is a maxim of this law of nations, manifested by the common constant usage, and universal entrances, unimpeached by any one contrary instance (where this law hath prevailed) of all mankind in their political societies; nor is this practice controlled by express revelation, but is rather confirmed; Jer. ii. 10.

Therefore to deny the lawfulness of the authority inquired after, and its due execution, is contrary to the law of nations.

III. From God's institution, in and by laws positive, upon doctrines of faith, and ways of worship, of pure revelation.

For,

1. Among the people of the Jews, as is known and confessed, God appointed this as the chief and supreme care and duty of the magistrate, to provide by the authority committed to him, that his worship, as by himself revealed, should be preserved and provided for, in all the concernments of it; and that what was contrary unto it in some instances, he

erce and restrain; Deut. xiv. 2, 3. 18, 19. xvi.

ugh the instituted worship of God was for the
art then typical, and to endure but for a season,
reservation of that worship by God commanded
al duty; Deut. xvi. 20.
l's command to the magistrate, for the exercise of
d duty in reference unto his typical worship, did
t it, as typical, but as his worship.
law and command of God for the magistrate in
aonwealth to take care and do as above, was not
minent privilege, blessing, and advantage to the
ealth, as such; but it was also a special mercy to
ry one of his chosen ones in that commonwealth;
is given or granted by God to all or any of his
the way of privilege or mercy, is not disannulled,
by express revocation, or the institution of some-
oiting a greater privilege or mercy, wherewith the
ves inconsistent.
revocation of this grant, or command and insti-
appointment of any thing inconsistent with it,
the gospel.
niversally to deny the right and exercise of the
ired after, is contrary to the positive law of God,
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re revelation; such as were those possessed and
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om the example of all godly magistrates, ac-
l God from the foundation of the world.

e is no one magistrate left on record in the whole
d, with any commendation given unto him, or
n of him, as such, but it is firstly and chiefly on
t, that he exerted the power and duty inquired
id, Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah, as others, are

e the days of the publication of the gospel, no
ate hath obtained a good report among the saints
es of Christ, but upon the same account.
ne magistrate is remembered to have omitted

this care, work, or duty, but a mark or blot is left upon him for it, as a person disapproved and rejected of God.

4 Nothing but an express discharge by way of revelation, can acquit a magistrate from following the example of all and every one of them, who in their work have been approved of God, in that wherein they were so approved. Wherefore,

To affirm that the supreme magistrate ought not to exert his authority for the ends mentioned, is to affirm, that the magistrate is now accepted with God, in and for the not doing of that which all other magistrates have been accepted with God in and by the doing of; which seems unreasonable.

V. From the promises of gospel times.

For,

1. Promises given in a way of privilege and mercy, that men should do any thing, declare it to be their duty so to do.

2. There are many promises that in gospel times magistrates shall lay out their power, and exert their authority, for the furtherance and preservation of the true worship of God, the profession of the faith, the worshippers and professors thereof, and therein the whole interest of Zion; Isa. i. 26. xlix. 22, 23.

3. All the promises relating unto God's providential dispensations in the world, with reference unto the interest of his church and people, do centre in this, that the rulers in and of the world shall exert and exercise their power in subserviency to the interest of Christ, which lies in his truth and his worship; which cannot be done, if the power inquired after be denied; Isa. lx. 3. 11—17. Rev. xi. 15.

To say, then, that the supreme magistrate in a commonwealth of men professing the true Christian religion, ought not to exert his legislative and executive power in the defence, and for the furtherance of the truth and worship of God, and for the restraint of the things that are destructive thereunto, is to say, that 'the promise of God is of no effect.'

VI. From the equity of gospel rules.

For,

1. Whatever is of moral equity, and hath the power of obligation from thence, the gospel supposeth, and leaves

men under that obligation, pressing them unto obedience thereunto; Phil. iv. 8.

2. Whatever was instituted and appointed of God formerly, is of moral positive equity, if it be not repealed by the gospel; and therefore the forementioned institution of the magistrate's duty in the things under consideration, is supposed in the gospel.

3. The gospel rules on this supposition are, that the magistrate is to promote all good, and to hinder all evil that comes to his cognizance, that would disadvantage the whole, by its civil disturbance, or provoking God against it, and that in order to the interest of Christ and his church; Rom. xiii. 1—7. 1 Tim. ii. 2. Prov. viii. 15, 16.

4. That what is good and evil upon an evangelical account, evidently and manifestly is exempted from these rules, cannot be proved.

Therefore to say it, is contrary to the equity of gospel rules.

VII. From the confession of all the Protestant churches in the world.

That all the Protestant churches in the world assert, at least the whole of the duty contained in the affirmative of the question to be incumbent on the supreme magistrate, is known to all men that care to know what they assert.

VIII. From the confession of those in particular, who suffer in the world on the account of the largeness of their principles, as to toleration and forbearance.

The Independents; whose words in their confession are as followeth:

'Although the magistrate is bound to encourage, promote, and protect the professors and profession of the gospel, and to manage and order civil administrations in a due subserviency to the interest of Christ in the world, and to that end to take care that men of corrupt minds and conversations do not licentiously publish and divulge blasphemies and errors, in their own nature subverting the faith, and inevitably destroying the souls of them that receive them; yet in such differences about the doctrines of the gospel, or ways of the worship of God, as may befall men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, not disturbing others in their ways

or worship that differ from them, there is no warrant for the magistrate under the gospel to abridge them of their liberty.'

IX. From the spiritual sense of the generality of godly men in the world.

This can be no otherwise known, but by the declaration of their judgments, and as to what can by that way be found out or discovered, a thousand to one, of men truly godly, are for the affirmative, 'Vox populi Dei, est vox Dei.'

X. From the pernicious consequences of the contrary assertion; whereof I shall mention only two.

1. The condemnation and abrenunciation of the whole work of reformation, in this and other nations, so far as it hath been promoted by laws or constitutions of supreme magistrates: as in the removal of idolatry, destroying of idols and images, prohibiting the mass, declaring and asserting the doctrine of the gospel, supporting the professors of it; which things have been visibly owned and blessed of God.

2. The destruction of the plea of Christ's interest in the government of the nations; especially as stated by them, who in words contend to place him in the head of their laws and fundamental constitutions; where nothing in a government may be done for him, nothing against them who openly oppose him, men can scarce be thought to act under him, and in subordination to him.

The conclusion from hence is, to advance an opinion into any necessity of its being received, which is contrary to the law of nature and nations, God's institutions and promises, the equity of gospel rules, the example of all magistrates who have obtained testimony from God, that they discharged their duty unto acceptation with him, to the confession of all Protestant churches, the spiritual sense of the generality of godly men in the world, and attended in itself with pernicious consequences, seems to be the effect of selfulness, and readiness to impose men's private apprehensions upon others, the only evil pretended to be avoided by it.

II. The next Question is,

'May the supreme magistrate, by laws and penalties, compel any one who holds the head Christ Jesus, to sub-

scribe to that confession of faith, and attend to that way of worship which he esteems incumbent on him to promote and further?

That we may answer distinctly, observe,

I. That the inquiry is concerning them only that hold the head; for others, their case is not proposed. They are left to the providence of God, in his working on the hearts of them whom he raiseth up for governors, according to the measure of light, love, and zeal, which he shall be pleased to impart unto them. And though it cannot be proved, that any magistrate is authorized from God to take away the life or lives of any man or men, for their disbelieving or denying any heads or articles of the Christian religion; yet it doth not seem to be the duty of any professing obedience to Jesus Christ, to make any stated, legal, unalterable provision for their immunity, who renounce him.

II. That things or opinions of public scandal, national demerit, and reproach to the profession of the gospel, ought to be restrained from being divulged by that public speaking of the press, or in extrafamilial assemblies, both which, according to the usage of all nations, are under the power, and at the disposal of the supreme magistrate, was before proved in our answer to the first inquiry.

III. It is agreed that the measure of doctrinal holding the head, consists in some few clear fundamental propositions.

IV. It cannot be denied but that most men in the determination of this question, have run into extremes, much upon the account of their present interest, or that of some party of men, wherein and with which as to some special self-ends, they are engaged.

These things being premised, I answer to the question negatively, and that because the authority inquired after, exerted to the ends mentioned, would immediately affect the consciences, and set up itself in direct opposition to the light of God therein; a defect of proving the conveyance of such an authority over the consciences of men holding the head, having been long since discovered.

The third Question.

'Whether it be convenient that the present way of the maintenance of ministers or preachers of the gospel be

removed and taken away, or changed into some other provision.

Ans. I. That the public preachers of the gospel ought to be maintained, by a participation in the temporal things of them to whom the word is preached, is an appointment of the Lord Christ, and of the apostles in his name and authority; 1 Cor. ix. 14. Gal. vi. 6.

II. The reasonableness of this gospel institution is manifested by the Holy Ghost: 1. From the law of nature; Luke x. 7. 1 Cor. ix. 7. 11. 2. From the law of nations in the same place. 3. From the tendency and equity of Mosaical institutions; 1 Cor. ix. 9—13.

III. Where God by providential dispensations hath laid things in a nation, in a subserviency to an institution of Christ according to his promise, Psal. ii. 8. Isa. xlix. 23. as he hath done in this case, to oppose that order of things, seems to be a fighting against God and his anointed.

IV. The payment of tithes, 1. Before the law; Gen. xiv. 20. Heb. vii. 4, 5. with, 2. The like usage amongst all nations, living according to the light of nature; 3. Their establishing under the law; with, 4. The express relation in gospel appointment unto that establishment, 1 Cor. ix. 14. do make that kind of payment so far pleadable, that no man, without being able to answer and satisfy that plea, can with any pretence of a good conscience, consent to their taking away.

V. A maintenance by a participation in men's temporals, for those who preach the gospel, being expressly appointed by Jesus Christ, and reference for the proportion, being directly made by the apostle, unto the proportion allotted by God himself under the Old Testament; for any man, or number of men, to suppose they can make a better and wiser allotment, especially when and where a near approachment thereunto is already made by Providence, seems to be a contending with him, who is mightier than they.

VI. To deprive preachers of the gospel, when sent out into their Master's harvest, and attending unto their work, according to the best of the light which the present age enjoyeth, with visible and glorious success, of the portion, hire, wages, or temporal supportment prepared for them in the good providence of God, upon pretences of inconveniencies, and di-

ions of some prejudiced men, seems to be an attempt
e paralleled from the foundation of the world.
Wherever, or in what nation soever, there hath been
il of the maintenance provided in the providence of
the necessary supportment of the public dispensers
'ord, the issue hath been a fatal and irrecoverable
ıtage to the gospel and interest of Christ in those

ɔears then, first, That to take away the public mainte-
'ovided in the good providence of God, for the public
ırs of the gospel, upon pretences of present incon-
, or promise of future provision, is a contempt of
and faithfulness of God towards his church, and in
ms, downright robbery.
ndly, To entitle a nation unto such an action, by
ş it on them without their consent, is downright
on.
. An alteration of the way of payment of that revenue
s provided in the providence of God for public
s, by the way of tithes, into some other way of pay-
ntinuing the present right, is not obnoxious or liable
f the forementioned evils, but its convenience or in-
ɔnce may be freely debated.

Yours,

J. O.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING LITURGIES,

AND

THEIR IMPOSITION.

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CHAP. I.

The state of the Judaical church. The liberty given by Christ, 1. *From the arbitrary impositions of men;* 2. *From the observances and rites instituted by Moses. The continuance of their observation in the patience and forbearance of God. Difference about them stated. Legal righteousness and legal ceremonies contended for together, the reason of it.*

ALTHOUGH our present inquiry be merely after one part of instituted worship under the gospel, and the due performance of it according to the mind of God; yet there being a communication of some light to be obtained from the turning over of that worship from the Mosaical, to the care and practice of the evangelical church, we shall look a little back unto it as therein stated, hoping thereby to make way for our clearer progress. What was the state of the church of God amongst the Jews as to instituted worship, when our blessed Saviour came to make the last and perfect discovery of his mind and will, is manifest both from the appointment of that worship in the law of Moses, and the practice of it remarked in the gospel. That the rites and ordinances of the worship in the church observed, were from the original in their nature carnal, and for the number many, on both accounts burdensome and grievous to the worshippers, the Scripture frequently declares. Howbeit, the teachers and rulers of the church being grown wholly carnal in their spirits, and placing their only glory in their yoke, not being able to see

to the end of the things that were to be done away, had increased those institutions both in number and weight, with sundry inventions of their own, which by their authority they made necessary to be observed by their disciples. In an equal practice of these divine institutions and human inventions, did our Lord Jesus Christ find the generality of the church at his coming in the flesh. The former being to continue in force until the time of reformation, at his resurrection from the dead, should come; both by his practice, and his teaching as a minister of circumcision, he confirmed and pressed frequently on the consciences of men, from the authority of the law-maker. The latter he utterly rejected, as introduced in a high derogation from the perfection of the law, and the honour of him whose prerogative it is to be the sole lawgiver of his church; the only fountain and disposer of his own worship. And this was the first dawning of liberty, that with the rising of this day-star did appear to the burdened and languishing consciences of men. He freed them by his teaching from the bondage of pharisaical arbitrary impositions, delivering their consciences from subjection to any thing in the worship of God, but his own immediate authority. For it may not be supposed that when he recommended unto his hearers an attendance unto the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, with an injunction to obey their directions, that he intended aught but those commands which they gave from him, and according to his mind, whose fear they did outwardly profess; seeing that both in general and particular he did himself condemn their traditions and impositions, giving out a rule of liberty from them unto others in his own constant practice. Yea, and whereas he would do civil things in their own nature indifferent, whereunto he was by no righteous law obliged, to avoid the offence of any which he saw might follow, Matt. xvii. 24. yet would he not practise or give countenance unto, nay, nor abstain from condemning of any o their ecclesiastical self-invented observances, though he saw them offended and scandalized at him, and was by other informed no less, chap. xv. 12—14. confirming his practic with that standing rule concerning all things relating to th worship of God, 'every plant which my heavenly Fathe hath not planted shall be rooted up.' But he is yet farthe

arry on the work of giving liberty to all the disci-
s, that he might take them into a subjection to himself,
his own authority only. The Aaronical priesthood being
hinge on which the whole ceremonial worship turned, so
t upon a change thereof, the obligation of the law unto
t worship, or any part of it, was necessarily to cease, our
ssed Saviour in his death and oblation entering upon the
ce, and actually discharging the great duty of his priest-
d, did virtually put an end to the whole obligation of the
t institution of Mosaical worship. In his death was the
curement of the liberty of his disciples completely finished
nto conscience, the supposed obligation of men's tra-
ons, and the real obligation of Mosaical institutions,
ng by him (the first as a prophet in his teaching, the last
a priest in his offering) dissolved and taken away. From
t day all the disciples of Christ were taken under his im-
diate lordship, and made free to the end of the world
m all obligations in conscience unto any thing in the
nship of God, but what is of his own institution and
mmand.

This dissolution of the obligation of 'the law of com-
ndments contained in ordinances,' being declared by his
stles and disciples, became a matter of great difference
l debate amongst the Jews to whom the gospel was first
ached. Those who before had slain him in pursuit of
ir own charge, that he would bring in such an alteration
the worship of God as was now divulged, were many of
m exceedingly enraged at this new doctrine; and had
ir prejudices against him and his way much increased,
ing indeed the light, because their deeds were evil; these
ng obstinately bent to seek after righteousness (as it
re, at least) by the works of the law, contended for their
emonial works as one of the best stakes in their hedge, in
ose observance they placed their chiefest confidence of
ir acceptance with God. But this is not all; many, who
ing under powerful convictions of his doctrine and mi-
les believed on him, did yet pertinaciously adhere to their
ceremonial worship; partly for want of clear light and
derstanding in the doctrine of the person and office of the
ssiah, partly through the power of those unspeakable
judices which influenced their minds in reference to thos-

rites, which being from of old observed by their forefather derived their original from God himself (much the most noble pleas and pretences, that ever any of the sons of men had to insist upon, for a subjection to such a yoke, as indeed had lost all power to oblige them); they were very desirous to mix the observance of them with obedience unto those institutions which they through the Lord Jesus had superadded to them.

Things being thus stated amongst the Jews, God having a great work to accomplish among and upon them in a short time, would not have the effect of it turn upon this hinge merely, and therefore in his infinite wisdom and condescention waved the whole contest for a season. For whereas within the space of forty years or thereabout he was to call and gather out from the body, by the preaching of the gospel, his remnant according to the election of grace, and to leave the rest inexcusable, thereby visibly glorifying his justice in their temporal and eternal ruin; it pleased him in a way of connivance and forbearance, to continue unto that people an allowance of the observation of their old worship, until the time appointed for its utter removal and actual casting away should come. Though the original obligation in conscience from the first institution of their ceremonies was taken away, yet hence arose a new necessity of the observation of them, even in them who were acquainted with the dissolution of that obligation; namely, from the offence and scandal of them to whom their observance was providentially indulged. On this account the disciples of Christ (and the apostles themselves) continued in a promiscuous observation of Mosaical institutions, with the rest of the body of that people, until the oppointed season of the utter rejection and destruction of the apostate churches were come. Hence many of the ancients affirm that James the less, living at Jerusalem in great reputation with all the people for his sanctity and righteousness, was not to the very time of his martyrdom known to be a Christian; which had been utterly impossible, had he totally abstained from communion with them in legal worship. Neither had that old controversy about the feast of the passover any other rise or spring than the mistake of some who thought John had observed it as a Christian, who kept it only as a Judaical feast among the

ews; whence the tradition ran strong that he observed it ith them, on the fourteenth day of the month, which precise me others turning it into a Christian observation, thought eet to lay aside.

Things being thus stated in the connivance and forbear- ce of God among the Jews, some of them not contented to e the indulgence granted to them in mere patience for the ds before mentioned, began sedulously to urge the Mosaical es upon all the Gentiles that were turned unto God; so aking upon the matter the preaching of the gospel to be t a new way of proselyting men unto Judaism. For the ost part it appears, that it was not any mistake or unac- ntedness with the liberty brought in by Christ, that made em engage in this quarrel for Moses, but that indeed being emselves carnal, and, notwithstanding the outward name of hrist, seeking yet for righteousness by the law, they teemed the observation of the ceremonies indispensably cessary unto salvation. This gave occasion unto Paul, nto whom the apostleship of the Gentiles was in a special anner committed, to lay open the whole mystery of that berty given by Christ to his disciples from the law of loses, as also the pernicious effects which its observance ould produce upon those principles which were pressed by e Judaical zealots. Passing by the peculiar dispensation f God towards the whole nation of the Jews, wherein the entile believers were not concerned; as also that determina- on of the case of scandal made at Jerusalem, Acts xv. and e temporary rule of condescension as to the abridgment of berty in some particulars agreed unto thereupon; he fully eclares, that the time of the appointment was come, that ere was no more power in the law of their institutions to ind the consciences of men, and that it was not in the ower of all the men in the world to impose the observation f them, or any like unto them, upon any one though the eanest of the disciples of Jesus Christ. The mind of Christ i this matter being fully made known, and the liberty of his isciples vindicated, various effects in the minds of men sued thereupon. Those who were in their inward princi- le themselves carnal, notwithstanding their outward pro- ssion of the gospel, delighting in and resting on an out- ard ceremonious worship, continued to oppose him with

violence and fury. Those who with the profession of the Lord Christ had also received the Spirit of Christ, and were by him instructed as in the perfection of righteousness, so in the beauty and excellency of the worship of the gospel, rejoiced greatly in the grace and privilege of the purchased liberty. After many contests this controversy was buried in the ruins of the city and temple, when the main occasion of it was utterly taken away.

By these degrees were the disciples of Christ put into a complete actual possession of that liberty which he had preached to them, and purchased for them; being first delivered from any conscientious subjection to the institutions of men, and then to the temporary institutions of God which concerned them not, they were left in a dependence on, and subjection unto himself alone, as to all things concerning worship; in which state he will assuredly continue and preserve them to the end of the world, under the guidance and direction of those rules for the use of their liberty which he has left them in his word. But yet the principle of the difference before mentioned, which is fixed in the minds of men by nature, did not die together with the controversy that mainly issued from it. We may trace it effectually exerting itself in succeeding ages. As ignorance of the righteousness of God, with a desire to establish their own, did in any take place, so also did endeavours after an outward ceremonious worship; for these things do mutually further and strengthen each other: and commonly proportionable unto men's darkness in the mystery of the righteousness of God in Christ, is their zeal for a worldly sanctuary and carnal ordinances. And such hath been the force and efficacy of these combined principles in the minds of carnal men, that under the profession of Christianity, they reduced things (in the papacy) to the very state and condition, wherein they were in Judaism at the time of reformation; the main principle in the one, and the other church in the apostacy, being legal righteousness, and an insupportable yoke of ceremonious observances in the worship of God. And generally in others the same principles of legal righteousness and a ceremonious worship have their prevalency in a just proportion, the latter being regulated by the former; and where by any *means* the former is everted, the latter for the most part falls

of its own accord; yea, though riveted in the minds of men by other prejudices also. Hence when the soul of a sinner is effectually wrought upon by the preaching of the gospel, to renounce himself and his own righteousness, and being truly humbled for sin, to receive the Lord Christ by faith, as 'made unto him of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' there needs for the most part little arguing to dissuade him from resting in, or laying wait upon an outside pompous worship; but he is immediately sensible of a delivery from its yoke, which he freely embraceth. And the reason hereof is, because that good Spirit by whom he is enabled to believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ, gives him also an acquaintance with, and an experience of, the excellency, glory, and beauty of that spiritual communion with God in Christ, whereunto believers are called in the gospel, which discovers the emptiness and uselessness of all, which before perhaps he admired and delighted in: for 'where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty.' And these things of seeking a righteousness in Christ alone, and delighting in spiritual communion with God, exercising itself only in the ways of his own appointment, do inseparably proceed from the same Spirit of Christ; as those before mentioned from the same principle of self and flesh.

CHAP. II.

The disciples of Christ taken into his own disposal. General things to be observed about gospel institutions. Their number small. Excess of men's inventions. Things instituted brought into a religious relation by the authority of Christ. That authority is none other. Suitableness to the matter of institutions to be designed to their proper significancy. That discoverable only by infinite wisdom. Abilities given by Christ for the administration of all his institutions. The way whereby it was done, Eph. iv. 7, 8. *Several postulata laid down. The sum of the whole state of our question in general.*

We have brought unto, and left the disciples of Jesus Christ in the hand and sole disposal of him, their Lord and Master; as to all things which concern the worship of God, and how he hath disposed of them, we are in the next place to con-

sider. Now he being the Head, Lord, and only Lawgiver of his church, coming from the bosom of his Father to make the last revelation of his mind and will, was to determine and appoint that worship of God in and by himself, which was to continue to the end of the world. It belongeth not unto our purpose to consider distinctly and apart all the several institutions which by him were ordained. We shall only observe some things concerning them in general, that will be of use in our progress, and so proceed to the consideration of that particular about which we are in disquisition of his mind and will. The worship of God is either moral and internal, or external and of sovereign or arbitrary institution. The former we do not now consider, nor was the ancient original fundamental obligation unto it altered or dissolved in the least by the Lord Christ. It was as unto superadded institutions of outward worship, which have their foundation and reason in sovereign will and pleasure, that he took his disciples into his own disposal, discharging them from all obligations to aught else whatever, but only what he should appoint. Concerning these, some few considerations will lead us to what in this discourse we principally intend. And the first is, That they were few, and easy to be observed. It was his will and pleasure, that the faith and love of his disciples should, in some few instances, be exercised in a willing ready subjection to the impositions of his wisdom and authority. And their service herein he doth fully recompense, by rendering those his institutions blessedly useful to their spiritual advantage. But he would not burden them with observances, either for nature or number, like or comparable unto them from which he purchased them liberty. And herein hath the practice of succeeding ages put an excellent lustre upon his love and tenderness. For whereas he is the Lord of his church, to whom the consciences of his disciples are in an unquestionable subjection; and who can give power and efficacy to his institutions to make them useful to their souls? Yet when some of their fellow-servants came, I know not how, to apprehend themselves enabled to impose arbitrarily their appointments, for reason seeming good to their wisdom, they might have been counted moderate, if they had not given above ten commandments for his *one*. Bellarmine tells us, indeed, that the laws and institu-

tions of the church that absolutely bind all Christians, so that they sin if they omit their observation, are upon the matter but four; namely, to observe the fasts of Lent and Ember-weeks, to keep the holydays, confession once a year, and to communicate at Easter; De Rom. Pontif. lib. 4. cap. 18. But whereas they double the number of the sacred ceremonies instituted by Christ, and have every one of them a greater number of subservient observations attending on them; so he must be a stranger to their councils, canons, and practices, that can believe his insinuation.

Again, as the institutions and ordinances of Christ in the outward worship of God, whose sole foundation was in his will and pleasure, were few and easy to be observed, being brought into a relation of worship unto God by virtue of his institution and command, without which no one thing in their kind can do so more than another; so they were, for the matter of them, such as he knew had an aptness to be serviceable unto the significancy whereunto they were appointed by him, which nothing but infinite wisdom can judge of. And this eternally severs them from all things of men's inventions, either to the same purpose, or in the same way to be used. For as whatever they shall appoint in the worship of God can have no significancy at all, as unto any spiritual end, for want of a Christ-like authority in their institution, which alone can add that significancy to them, which in themselves without such an appointment they have not; so they themselves want wisdom to choose the things which have any fitness or aptitude to be used for that end, if the authority were sufficient to introduce with them such a significancy. There is nothing they can in this kind fix upon, but as good reason as any they are able to tender for the proof of their expedience unto the end proposed to them, will be produced to prove them meet for a quite other signification and purpose, and the contrary unto them, at least things diverse to them, be asserted with as fair pretences, as meet to be used in their place and room.

But that which we principally shall observe in and about Christ's institutions of gospel worship, is the provision that is made for the administration of it acceptably unto God. That is of the instituted worship of his public assemblies that we treat. The *chiefest* acts and parts thereof may be re-

ferred to these three heads, preaching of the word, administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline; all to be performed with prayer and thanksgiving. The rule for the administration of these things, so far as they are purely of his institution, he gave his disciples in his appointment of them. Persons also he designed to the regular administration of these his holy things in the assemblies of his saints; namely, pastors and teachers to endure to the end of the world, after those of an extraordinary employment under him were to cease. It remaineth then to consider, how the persons appointed by him unto the administration of these holy things in his assemblies, and so to the discharge of the whole public worship of God, should be enabled thereunto; so as the end by him aimed at of the edification of his disciples, and the glory of God, might be attained. Two ways there are whereby this may be done. First, By such spiritual abilities for the discharge and performance of this whole work as will answer the mind of Christ therein, and so serve for the end proposed. Secondly, By the prescription of a form of words whose reading and pronunciation in these administrations should outwardly serve as to all the ends of the prayer and thanksgiving required in them, which they do contain. It is evident that our Saviour fixed on the former way; what he hath done as to the latter, or what his mind is concerning it, we shall afterward inquire.

For the first, as in many other places so signally in one the apostle acquaints us with the course he has taken, and the provision that he hath made; namely, Eph. iv. 7—16. 'Unto every of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints ,for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,' &c. The thing aimed at is the bringing of all the saints and disciples of Christ, the whole church, to that measure and perfection of grace which Christ hath assigned to them in this world, that they may be meet for himself to receive in glory.

The means whereby this is to be done and effected, is the faithful, regular, and effectual discharge of the work of the ministry, unto which the administration of all his ordinances and institutions do confessedly belong. That this work may be discharged in an orderly manner to the end mentioned, he has granted unto his church the offices mentioned, to be executed by persons variously called thereunto, according to his mind and will.

The only inquiry remaining is, how these persons shall be enabled for the discharge of their office, and so accomplishment of the work of the ministry. This he declares is by the communication of grace and spiritual gifts from heaven unto them by Christ himself. Here lieth the spring of all that followeth; the care hereof he hath taken upon himself unto the end of the world. He that enabled the shoulders of the Levites to bear the ark of old, and their arms to slay the sacrifices, without which natural strength those carnal ordinances could not have been observed (nor was the ark to be carried for a supply of defect of ability in the Levites), hath upon their removal, and the institution of the spiritual worship of the gospel, undertaken to supply the administrators of it with spiritual strength and abilities for the discharge of their work, allowing them supply of the defect of that which he hath taken upon himself to perform. I suppose then that these ensuing will seem but reasonable postulata.

1. That the means which Jesus Christ hath appointed for the attaining of any end, is every way sufficient for that purpose whereunto it is so appointed: his wisdom exacts our consent to this proposition.

2. That what he hath taken upon himself to perform unto the end of the world, and promised so to do, that he will accomplish accordingly: here his faithfulness requires our assent.

3. That the communication of spiritual gifts and graces to the ministers of the gospel, is the provision that Christ hath made for the right discharge of the work of their ministry, unto the edification of his body. This lies plain in the text.

4. That the exercise and use of those gifts in all those administrations for which they are bestowed, are expected

and required by him. The nature of the thing itself, with innumerable testimonies, confirm this truth also.

5. That it is derogatory to the glory, honour, and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ to affirm that he ceaseth to bestow gifts for the work of the ministry, whilst he continueth and requireth the exercise and discharge of that work. What hath befallen men, or doth yet befall them through the wretched sloth, darkness, and unbelief, which their wilful neglect of dependence on him, or of stirring up or improving of what they do receive from him, and the mischiefs that have accrued to the church by the intrusion of such persons into the place and office of the ministry as were never called nor appointed by him thereunto, are not to be imputed unto any failing on his part, in his promise of dispensing the gifts mentioned to the end of the world. Of which several positions we shall have some use in our farther progress.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, having delivered his disciples from the yoke of Mosaical institutions which lay upon them from of old, as also from being entangled in their consciences by or from any inventions of men imposed on them, giving them rules for the practice of the liberty whereunto by him they were vindicated, taking them for the future into his own sole disposal in all things concerning the worship of God, he appoints in his sovereign authority both the ordinances which he will have alone observed in his church, and the persons by whom they are to be administered, furnishing them with spiritual abilities to that end and purpose, promising his presence with them to the end of the world, commands them to set such in his name and strength in the way and unto the work that he hath allotted to them.

That now which on this foundation we are farther to inquire into is, whether over and above what we have recounted, our Saviour hath appointed, or by any ways given allowance unto, the framing of a stinted form of prayers and praises to be read and used by the administrators of his ordinances in their administration of them; or whether the prescription and imposing of such a form or liturgy upon those who minister in the church, in the name and authority of Christ, be not contrary to his mind, and cross to his whole design, for perpetuating of his institutions to the end of the world,

in due order and manner. And this we shall do; and withal discover the rise and progress which such liturgies have had and made in the church of God.

CHAP. III.

Of the Lord's Prayer, and what may be concluded from thence, as to the invention and imposition of liturgies in the public worship of God. The liberty whereunto Christ vindicated, and wherein he left his disciples.

The first plea used to give countenance unto the composing and imposing of liturgies, is taken from that act of our Saviour himself, who, upon the request of his disciples, composed for them a form of prayer, which being recorded in the gospel, is said to have the force of an institution, rendering the observation or use of that form a necessary duty unto all believers to the end of the world. And this plea is strengthened by a discovery which some learned men say they have made; namely, that our blessed Saviour composed this form which he delivered to his disciples, out of such other forms as were then in ordinary use among the Jews; whereby, they say, he confirmed that practice of prescribing forms of prayer among them; and recommended the same course of proceeding, by his so doing, unto his disciples. Now though it be very hard to discover how, upon a supposition that all which is thus suggested is the very truth, any thing can be hence concluded to the justification of the practice of imposing liturgies, now inquired into; yet that there may be no pretence left unto a plea, though never so weak and infirm, of such an extract as this lays claim unto, it will be necessary to consider the severals of it. It is generally apprehended, that our Saviour in his prescription of that form of prayer unto his disciples did aim at two things. 1. That they might have a summary symbol of all the most excellent things they were to ask of God in his name, and so a rule of squaring all their desires and supplications by. This end all universally concur in; and therefore Matthew considering the doctrinal nature of it, gives it a place in the first recorded sermon of our Saviour, by way of anticipation,

and mentions it not when he comes to the time wherein it was really first delivered by him. 2. For their benefit and advantage, together with other intercessions that they should also use the repetition of those words, as a prescript form wherein he had comprised the matter of their requests and petitions. About this latter, all men are not agreed in their judgments, whether indeed our Saviour had this aim in it or no. Many learned men suppose that it was a supply of a rule and standard of things to be prayed for, without prescribing to them the use or rehearsal of that form of words, that he aimed at. Of this number are Musculus, Grotius, and Cornelius à Lapide, with many others; but it may suffice to intimate that some of all sorts are so minded. But we shall not, in the case in hand, make use of any principle so far obnoxious unto common prejudice, as experience proves that opinion of those learned men to be. Let it therefore be taken for granted, that our Saviour did command that form to be repeated by his disciples; and let us then consider what will regularly ensue thereupon. Our Saviour at that time was minister of the circumcision, and taught the doctrine of the gospel under and with the observation of all the worship of the Judaical church. He was not yet glorified, and so the Spirit was not as yet given; I mean that Spirit which he promised unto his disciples, to enable them to perform all the worship of God by him required at their hands, whereof we have before spoken. That then which the Lord Jesus prescribed unto his disciples, for their present practice in the worship of God, seems to have belonged unto the economy of the Old Testament. Now to argue from the prescription of, and outward helps for the performance of the worship of God under the Old Testament, unto a necessity of the like or the same under the New, is upon the matter to deny that Christ is ascended on high, and to have given spiritual gifts unto men, eminently distinct from, and above those given out by him under the Judaical pedagogy. However their boldness seems unwarrantable, if not intolerable, who to serve their own ends upon this prescription of his, do affirm, that our Lord Jesus composed this form out of such as were then in common use among the Jews. For as the proof of their assertion which they insist on, *namely*, the finding of some of the things expressed in it, or

tions of it, in the writings of the Jews, the eldest whereof me hundreds of years younger than this prayer itself, is t weak and contemptible; so the affirmation itself is ex- ing derogatory to the glory and honour of his wisdom, ning unto him a work so unnecessary and trivial, as ld scarce become a man of ordinary prudence and autho-

But yet to carry on the work in hand, let it be sup- d, that our Saviour did command that form of prayer out uch as were then customarily used among the Jews, h is false, and asserted without any colour of proof; that he prescribed it as a form to be repeated by his iples, which we have shewn many very eminently learned to deny; and that though he prescribed it as a minister he Judaical church, and to his disciples whilst members hat church, under the economy of the Old Testament, having as yet received the Spirit and gifts of the New, that he did it for the use and observance of his disciples he end of the world, and that not as to the objective re- ation of their prayers, but as to the repetition of the ds; yet it doth not appear how from all these concessions argument can be drawn to the composition and impo- n of liturgies, whose rise and nature we are inquiring r. For it is certain, that our Saviour gives this direc- for the end which he intends in it, not primarily as to the lic worship of the assemblies of his disciples, but as to guidance of every individual saint in his private devotion; lt. vi. 6. 8. Now from a direction given unto private ons, as to their private deportment in the discharge of religious duty, to argue unto a prescription of the whole ship of God in public assemblies, is not safe. But that may hear the argument drawn from this act of our iour speak out all that it hath to offer, let us add this to the forementioned presumptions, that our Saviour h appointed and ordained, that in the assemblies of his iples in his worship by him required, they who ad- ister in his name in and to the church, should repeat the ds of this prayer, though not peculiarly suited to any of his institutions; what will thence be construed to ue? why then it is supposed that this will follow; That s not only lawful, but the duty of some men to compose er forms, a *hundred times* as many, suited in their judg-

ment to the due administration of all ordinances of worship in particular, imposing them on the evangelical administrators of those ordinances, to be read by them, with a severe interdiction of the use of any other prayers in those administrations. Bellarmine, de Pont. Rom. lib. 4. cap. 16. argues for the necessity of the observation of rites indifferent, when once commanded by the church, from the necessity of the observation of baptism, in itself a thing indifferent, after it was commanded by Christ. Some think this is not to dispute but blaspheme. Nor is the inference before mentioned of any other complexion. When it shall be made to appear, that whatever it was lawful for the Lord Christ to do, and to prescribe to his church and disciples in reference to the worship of God, the same, or any thing of the like nature, it is lawful for men to do, under the pretence of their being invested with the authority of the church, or any else whatever, then some colour will be given to this argument; which being raised on the tottering suppositions before mentioned, ends in that which seems to deserve a harder name than at present we shall affix unto it.

And this is the state and condition wherein the disciples of Christ were left by himself, without the least intimation of any other impositions in the worship of God to be laid upon them. Nor in any thing, or by any act of his, did he intimate the necessity or lawful use of any such liturgies as these which we are inquiring after, or prescribed and limited forms of prayers or praises to be used or read in the public administration of evangelical institutions, but indeed made provision rendering all such prescriptions useless; and, because they cannot be made use of, but by rejection of the provision by himself made, unlawful.

CHAP. IV.

f the worship of God by the apostles. No liturgies used by them, nor in the churches of their plantation. Argument from their practice. Reasons pleaded for the use of liturgies. Disabilities of church officers for gospel administration to the edification of the church. Uniformity in the worship of God. The practice of the apostles as to those pretences considered. Of other impositions. The rule given by the apostles. Of the liturgies falsely ascribed unto some of them.

ur next inquiry is after the practice of the apostles, the st interpretation of the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the 'agenda' of the church, or what he would have done erein in the worship of God, and how. That one end of eir being furnished with the Spirit of Christ, was the right d due administration of his ordinances in his church, to e edification of his disciples, I suppose will not be denied. y virtue of his assistance, and the gifts from him received, ey discharge this part of their duty accordingly. That ey used any liturgies in the church-worship wherein they nt at any time before the disciples, cannot with any lour of proof be pretended. The Scripture gives us an count of many of their prayers, of none that were a repetin of a form. If any such were used by them, how came the mory of them utterly to perish from off the earth? Some leed of the ancients say, that they used the Lord's Prayer the consecration of the Eucharist, which by others is denied, ing in itself improbable, and the testimonies weak that produced in behalf of its assertion. But as hath been ewed, the use of that prayer no way concerns the present estion. There are no more Christ's but one; to us re is one Lord Jesus Christ. For him who hath affirmed, t it is likely they used forms of prayer and homilies comsed for them by Saint Peter, I suppose he must fetch his dence out of the same authors that he used who affirmed t Jesus Christ himself went up and down singing mass. The practice then of the apostles is not, as far as I know, any sober and learned persons controverted in this matter. ey administered the holy things of the gospel, by virtue the holy gifts they had received. But they were apostles.

The inquiry is, what directions and commands they gave unto the bishops or pastors of the churches which they planted, that they might know how to behave themselves in the house and worship of God. Whatever they might do in the discharge of their duty by virtue of their extraordinary gifts, yet the case might be much otherwise with them, who were intrusted with ordinary ministerial gifts only. But we do not find that they made any distinction in this matter between themselves and others. For as the care of all the churches was on them, the duties whereof they were to discharge by virtue of the gifts they had received, according to their commission empowering them thereunto, so to the bishops of particular churches, they gave charge to attend unto the administration of the holy things in them, by virtue of the gifts they had received to that purpose, according to the limits of their commission. And upon a supposition that the apostles were enabled to discharge all gospel administrations to the edification of the church, by virtue of the gifts they had received, which those who were to come after them in the performance of the same duties, should not be enabled unto, it cannot be imagined but that they would have provided a supply for that want and defect themselves; and not have left the church halt and maimed to the cure of those men, whose weakness and unfitness for the duty was its disease. So then neither did the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ use any liturgies, in the sense spoken of, in their administration of the worship instituted by him in his church, nor did they prescribe or command any such to the churches, or their officers that were planted in them; nor by any thing intimate the usefulness of any such liturgy, or form of public worship, as after ages found out and used.

Thus far then is the liberty given by Christ unto his church preserved entire, and the request seems not immodest that is made for the continuance of it. When men cry to God for the liberty in his worship, which was left unto them by Christ and his apostles, he will undoubtedly hear, though their fellow-servants should be deaf to the like requests made unto them. And truly they must have a great confidence in their own wisdom and sufficiency, who will undertake to appoint and impose on others the observation of

ings in the worship of God, which neither our Lord Jesus r his apostles did appoint or impose.

Two things are principally pretended as grounds of the position of public liturgies. First, The disability of the sent ministers of the churches to celebrate and administer ordinances of the gospel to the honour of God, and edifi- tion of the church, without the use of them. Secondly, e great importance of uniformity in the worship of God, t possibly to be attained, but by virtue of this expedient. lesire to know, whether these arguments did occur to the sideration of the apostles or no. If they shall say they did, esire to know why they did not make upon them the pro- ion now judged necessary, and whether those that so do, not therein prefer their wisdom and care for the churches God, unto the wisdom and care of the apostles. If it shall said, that the bishops or pastors of the churches, in their ys, had abilities for the discharge of the whole work of the nistry without this relief, so that the apostles had no need make any such supply; I desire to know from whom they d these abilities. If it be said that they had them from us Christ, I then shall yet also farther ask, whether ordi- ry bishops or pastors had any other gifts from Jesus Christ, t what he promised to bestow on ordinary bishops and tors of his churches. It seems to me that he bestowed more upon them than he promised to bestow, viz. gifts the work of the ministry, with an especial regard to that ward condition of his churches, whereunto by his pro- ence they were disposed. It will then in the next place inquired, whether the Lord Jesus Christ promised to give r other gifts to the ordinary bishops and pastors of the rches in those days, than he promised to all such officers his church to the end of the world. If this appear to be state of things, that the promise by virtue whereof they eived those gifts and abilities for the discharge of their y, which rendered the prescription of liturgies needless, to the first ground of them pretended, did and do equally pect all that succeed in the same office and duty, ac- ding to the mind and will of Christ unto the end of the rld, is not the pretended necessity derogatory to the glory the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, as plainly intimating that doth not continue to fulfil his promise; or at least a full

declaration of men's unbelief, that they do not, nor will depend upon him for the accomplishment of the same. Thus the first pretended ground of the necessary use of such liturgies as we speak of endeth in a reflection upon the honour of our Lord Jesus, or a publication of their own unbelief and apostacy.

The second is like the former. It will not, I suppose, be denied but that the apostles took care for the unity of the churches, and for that uniformity in the worship of God which is acceptable unto him. Evidence lies so full unto it in their writings that it cannot be denied. Great weight every where they lay upon this duty of the churches, and propose unto them the ways whereby it may be done, with multiplied commands and exhortations to attend unto them. Whence is it then that they never once intimate any thing of that which is now pressed, as the only medium for the attaining of that end? It cannot but seem strange to some, that this should be the only expedient for that uniformity which is acceptable unto God, and yet not once come into the thoughts of any of the apostles of Christ, so as to be commended unto the churches for that purpose. Considering the many treacheries that are in the hearts of men, and the powerful workings of unbelief under the most solemn outward professions, I fear it will appear at the last day, that the true rise of most of the impositions on the consciences of men, which on various pretences are practised in the world, is from the secret thoughts that either Christ doth not take that care of his churches, nor make that supply unto them of spiritual abilities for the work of the ministry, which he did in the days of old; or that men are now grown wiser than the apostles, and those who succeeded them in the administration of the things of God, and so are able to make better provision for attaining the end they professedly aimed at, than they knew how to do.

The heathen, I confess, thought forms of prayer to be a means of preserving a uniformity in their religious worship. Hence they had a solemn form for every public action; yea, for those orations which the magistrates had unto the people. So Livius informs us, that when Sp. Posthumius the consul was to speak unto the people about the wickednesses that were perpetrated by many under the pretence of some Baccha-

nalian superstition, he gave them an account of the usefulness of the 'solenne precationis carmen,' which he had recited to keep out, and prevent such differences about their religion as were then fallen out, lib. 39. 'Concione advocata cum solenne precationis carmen, quod præfari priusquam populum alloquantur, magistratus solent, peregisset consul, ita cæpit. Nulli unquam concioni, Quirites, tam non solum apta, sed etiam necessaria hæc solennis Deorum comprecatio fuit, quæ nos admoneret, hos esse Deos quos colere venerari, precaique majores vestri instituissent, non illos,' &c. But I hope we shall not prefer their example and wisdom before that of our Lord Christ and his apostles.

Were prejudices removed, and self-interests laid out of the way, a man would think there were not much more necessity for the determination of this difference; Christ and his apostles, with the apostolical churches, knew no such liturgies. At least it seems, as was said, not an unreasonable request, to ask humbly and peaceably at the hands of any of the sons of men, that they would be pleased to allow unto ministers of the gospel that are sound in the faith, and known to be, who will willingly submit the trial of their ministerial abilities to the judgment of any who are taught of God, and enabled to discern of them aright, that liberty in the worship of God which was confessedly left unto them by Christ and his apostles. But the state of things is altered in the world. At a convention of the apostles and others, wherein the Holy Ghost did peculiarly preside, when the question about impositions was agitated, it was concluded that nothing should be imposed on the disciples but what was necessary for them to observe antecedently to any impositions, Acts xv. 28. necessary though not in their own nature, yet in the posture of things in the churches, necessary to the avoidance of scandal, whereby the observation of that injunction was to be regulated. Nor was there among the things called necessary the imposition of any one thing positively to be practised by any of the disciples in the worship of God, but only an abridgement of their liberty in some few external things, to which it did really extend. But that spirit of wisdom, moderation, and tenderness whereby they were guided being rejected by men, they began to think that they might multiply impositions as to the

positive practice of the disciples of Christ in the worship of God at their pleasure, so that they could pretend that they were indifferent in themselves before the imposition of them, which gives, as they say, a necessity to their observation; which proceeding must be left to the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ; Matt. xxv. 45.

It is not worth our stay to consider what is pretended concerning the antiquity of liturgies, from some yet extant that bear the names of some of the apostles or evangelists. There is one that is called by the name of James, printed in Greek and Latin; another ascribed unto Peter, published by Lindanus; one also to Matthew, called the Ethiopic; another to Mark, which are in the Bible P. P. And pains have been taken by Santesius, Pamelius, and others, to prove them genuine; but so much in vain as certainly nothing could be more. Nor doth Baronius in their lives dare ascribe any such thing unto them. We need not any longer stay to remove this rubbish out of our way. They must be strangers to the spirit, doctrine, and writings of the apostles, who can impose such trash upon them, as these liturgies are stuffed withal. The common use of words in them not known in the ages of the apostles, nor of some of them ensuing; the parts in them whose contrivers and framers are known to have lived many ages after; the mentioning of such things in them, as were not once dreamed of in the days whereunto they pretend; the remembrance of them in them as long before them deceased, who are suggested to be their authors; the preferring of other liturgies before them when once liturgies came in use, with a neglect of them; which [with] the utter silence of the first Christian writers, stories, counsels concerning them, do abundantly manifest that they are plainly suppositions, of a very late fraud and invention. Yea, we have testimonies clear enough against this pretence. In Gregor. lib. 7. Epist. 63. Alcuinus, Amatorius, Rabanus, lib. P. P. tom. 10. with whom consent Walafridus, Strabo, Rupertus Titiensis, Berno, Radulphus Tangrensis, and generally all that have written any thing about liturgies in former days, many of whom shew how, when, and by whom the several parts of that public form which at length signally prevailed were invented and brought into use.

CHAP. V.

ractice of the churches in the first three centuries as to forms of ie worship. No set forms of liturgies used by them. The silence of irst writers concerning them. Some testimonies against them.

not about stinted forms of prayer in the worship and e of God, by those who of their own accord do make f that kind of assistance, judging that course to be : than any thing they can do themselves in the dis- e of the work of the ministry, but of the imposition of on others who desire 'to stand fast in the liberty with ı Christ hath made them free,' that we inquire. This m we have manifested to have been purchased for by the Lord Jesus, and the use of it continued by the les in their own practice, and to the churches planted mselves. And this will one day appear to have been icient plea for the maintenance of that liberty to the f the world. Now though what is purely matter of mong the succeeding churches, be not so far argu- ıtive as to be insisted on as a rule exactly binding us ı imitation of it; yet it is deservedly worthy of great leration, and not hastily to be rejected, unless it be rered to have been diverse from the word whereunto ı bound in all things to attend. We shall therefore some inquiry into the practice of those churches, as s matter of prescribing of forms of prayer in public h administrations, so far as any thing thereof is by antiquity transmitted unto us.

ur first inquiry shall be into the three first centuries, ıin confessedly the streams of gospel institutions did ore clear and pure from human mixtures, than in those ring, although few of the teachers that were of note do e from animadversions from those that have come after

It cannot be denied but that for the most part the hes and their guides within the space of the time d, walked in the paths marked out for them by the les, and made conspicuous by the footsteps of the first hes planted by them. It doth not then appear, for

aught as I can yet discover, that there was any attempt to invent, frame, and compose any liturgies or prescribed forms of administering the ordinances of the gospel, exclusive to the discharge of that duty by virtue of spiritual gifts received from Jesus Christ, much less for an imposition of any such forms on the consciences and practice of all the ministers of the churches within the time mentioned: if any be contrary minded, it is incumbent on them to evince their assertion by some instances of unquestionable truth. As yet, that I know of, this is not performed by any. Baronius, ad An. Christi 58. num. 102—104, &c. treating expressly of the public prayers of the ancient Christians, is wholly silent as to the use of any forms amongst them; though he contends for their worshipping towards the east, which custom when it was introduced, is most uncertain; but most certain that by many it was immoderately abused, who expressly worshipped the rising sun; of which abominable idolatry among Christians, Leo complains, Serm. 7. De Nativitate. Indeed the cardinal, ad An. 63. 12. 17. faintly contends, that some things in the liturgy of James were composed by him, because some passages and expressions of it are used by Cyril of Jerusalem in his Mistagog. 5. But whereas Cyril lived not within the time limited unto our inquiry, and those treatises are justly suspected to be suppositions, nor is the testimony of that liturgy once cited or mentioned by him, the weakness of this insinuation is evident. Yea, it is most probable, that whosoever was the composer of that forged liturgy, he took those passages out of those reputed writings of Cyril, which were known in the church long before the name of the other was heard of. I know no ground of expectation of the performance of that, which as yet men have come short in, namely, in producing testimonies for the use of such liturgies as we are inquiring after, considering the diligence, ability, and interest of those who have been already engaged in that inquiry. Now the silence of those, who in all probability would have given an account of them, had any such been in use in their days, with the description they gave us of such a performance of the worship of God in the assemblies of Christians, as is inconsistent with, and exclusive of, such prescribed forms as we treat of, is as full an evidence in this kind as our negative is

capable of. In those golden fragments of antiquity which we have preserved by Eusebius, I mean the epistles of the church of Smyrna about the martyrdom of Polycarpus, and of the churches of Vienna and Lyons concerning their persecution, we have not the least intimation of any such forms of service. In the epistle of Clemens, or the church of Rome to the church of Corinth, in those of Ignatius, in the writings of Justin Martyr, Clemens, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, and their contemporaries, there is the same silence concerning them. The pseudographical writings that bear the names of the men of those days, with any pretence of considerable antiquity, as the canons of the apostles, Quæstiones ad Orthodoxos, Dionysius Hierarch. Divin. Nom. will not help in the cause. For though in some of them there are prayers mentioned, and that for and about such things as were not 'in rerum natura,' in the days wherein those persons lived, unto whose names they are falsely ascribed; yet they speak nothing to the point of liturgies as stated in our inquiry. Something, I confess, may be found in some of the writings of some one or two of those of the third century, intimating the use of some particular prayers in some churches. So Origen, Homil. 11. in Hierimea. 'Ubi frequenter in oratione dicimus, da omnipotens, da nobis partem cum prophetis, da cum apostolis Christi tui, tribue ut inveniamur ad vestigia unigeniti tui.' But whether he speaks of a form, or of the matter only of prayer, I know not. But such passages belong not unto our purpose. Those who deal expressly about the order, state, and condition of the churches, and the worship of God in them, their prayers and supplications knew nothing of prescribed liturgies; yea, they affirm plainly that which is inconsistent with the use of them. The account given of the worship of the Christians in those days by Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, is known as having been often pleaded. I shall only mention it in our passage, and begin with the latter. 'Illuc,' saith he (that is, towards heaven), 'suspicientes Christiani' (not like the idolaters, who looked on their idols and images) 'manibus expansis' (not embracing altars or images as did the heathen) 'quia innocuis capito nudo, quia non erubescimus denique sine monitore, quia de pectore oramus,' not as they who repeat their

prayers after their priests or sacrificers, but pouring out our prayers conceived in our breasts; Apol. cap. 30. And again, cap. 39. 'Corpus sumus de conscientia, religionis et disciplinæ unitate, et spei fœdere coimus in cœtum et congregationem, ut ad Deum quasi vi facta precationibus ambiamus orantes. Hæc vis Deo grata est. Oramus etiam,' &c. Whether this description of the public worship of the Christians in those days be consistent with the prescribed forms contended about, impartial men may easily discern.

The former treateth of the same matter in his Apology in several places of it. *Ἄθεος μὲν οὖν ὡς οὐκ ἔσμεν, τὸν δημιουργὸν τῶν δε τοῦ παντὸς σεβόμενοι, ἀνενδεῆ αἱματων καὶ σπονδῶν καὶ θυμιαμάτων, ὡς ἐδεδάχθημεν λέγοντες, λόγῳ εὐχῆς καὶ εὐχαριστίας ἐφ' οἷς προσφερόμεθα πᾶσιν ὅση δύναμις αἰνοῦντες.* 'Atheists,' saith he, 'we are not, seeing we worship the Maker of the world, affirming indeed, as we are taught, that he stands in no need of blood, drink-offerings, or incense; in all our oblations we praise him according to our abilities, with' (or in the way of) 'prayer and thanksgivings.' This was, it seems, the liturgy of the church in the da s of Justin Martyr; they called upon God with prayer and thanksgivings according to the abilities they had received. The like account he gives of the prayers of persons converted to prepare themselves for baptism, as also of the prayers of the administrators of that ordinance. Afterward also, treating of the joining the baptized person unto the church, and the administration of the Lord's supper in the assembly, he adds, *Μετὰ τὸ οὕτως λοῦσαι τὸν πεπεισμένον, καὶ συγκατατεθαμένον ἐπὶ τοὺς λεγομένους ἀδελφοὺς ἄγομεν ἔνθα συνηγμενοι εἰσὶ, κοινὰς εὐχὰς ποιησομενοι ὑπὲρ τε ἑαυτων, καὶ τοῦ φωτισθέντος,* &c. 'After the believer who is joined unto us is thus washed, we bring him to those who are called brethren' (that is, the body of the church), 'thither where they are gathered together for to make their prayers and supplications for themselves and him who is' (newly) 'illuminated,' &c. These prayers he declares afterward, were made by him who did preside among the brethren in the assembly, that is, the bishop or pastor, who when he had finished his prayer, the whole people cried, Amen; which leaves small room for the practice of any liturgy that is this day extant, or that hath left any memory of itself in the world. These prayers

l supplications, he addeth, that the president of the as-
bly ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ ἀναπέμπει, poureth out according
his ability; and ἐπὶ πολὺ ποιεῖται: he doth this work at
ge, or continues long in his work of (praises unto God in
name of Jesus Christ). I know some have excepted
inst the usual interpretation of those words ὅση δύναμις;
ough they have not been able to assign any other
rable sense unto them, besides that which they would
lingly oppose. But as the rendering of them 'according
is ability,' or 'as he is able' may not only be justified,
evinced to be the only sense the words are capable of; so
argument in hand doth not as to its efficacy depend on
precise signification of those two words, but on the
ole contexture of the holy Martyr's discourse; so relating
the worship of the churches in those days, as to manifest
t the use of prescribed forms of liturgies to be read in
m was then utterly unknown.

I suppose it will be granted, that thetime we have been
uiring into, namely, the first three hundred years after
rist, was the time of the church's greatest purity, though
of her greatest prosperity; that the union of the several
rches was preserved, beyond what afterward was ever in
ospel way attained, and the uniformity in worship which
rist requires observed amongst them; but all this while
use of these liturgies was utterly unknown; which
kes the case most deplorable, that it should now be made
hinge whereon the whole exercise of the ministry must
n, it being a thing not only destitute of any warrant from
rist and his apostles, but utterly unknown to those
rches whose antiquity gives them deservedly reverence
hal; and so cannot claim its spring and original ante-
lent to such miscarryings and mistakes in the churches,
ll acknowledge to deserve a narrow and serious weigh-
and consideration; we may then, I suppose, without
ing occasion to the just imputution of any mistake, affirm,
at the composing and imposition of liturgies to be neces-
ily used or read in the administration of the ordinances
the gospel, is destitute of any plea or pretence, from
ripture or antiquity.

CHAP. VI.

The pretended antiquity of liturgies disproved. The most ancient. Their variety. Canons of councils about forms of church administrations. The reasons pleaded in the justification of the first invention of liturgies answered. Their progress and end.

CONSIDERING with what confidence the antiquity of liturgies in the churches of Christ hath been pretended, it may seem strange to some that we should so much as attempt to divert them of that plea and pretence. But the love of the truth enforceth us to contend against many prejudices in this matter. May a denial of their antiquity, with the reasons of that denial tendered, provoke any to assert it by such testimonies as we have not as yet had the happiness to come to an acquaintance with, the advantage as well as the trouble will be theirs who shall so do. Only in their endeavour to that purpose, I shall desire of them that they would not labour to impose on those whom they undertake to inform, by the ambiguous use of some words among the ancient, nor conclude a prescribed form of administration when they find mention of the administration itself, nor reckon reading of the Scriptures, or singing of psalms, as parts of the liturgy contended about, nor from the use of some particular prayer by some persons, argue for the equity or necessity of composing such entire liturgies, or offices as they call them, for all evangelical administrators, and their necessary observation. So that these conditions be observed, I shall profess myself much engaged unto any one who shall discover a rise of them within the limits of the antiquity that hath been usually pretended and pleaded in their justification and practice. For my part I know not any thing that ever obtained a practice and observation among Christians, whose springs are more dark and obscure than these of liturgies. They owe not their original to any councils, general or provincial; they were not the product of the advice or consent of any churches, nor was there any one of them at any time completed. No pleas can I as yet discover in them of old about uniformity in their use, or any

consent in them about them. Every church seemeth to have done what seemed good in the church's own eyes, after once the way unto the use of them was opened. To whom in particular we are indebted for that invention, I know not: it may be those who are wiser do; and I wish they would value the thanks that they may have for the discovery when they shall be pleased to make it. They seem to me to have had but slender originals. One invented one form of prayer, or thanksgiving, or benediction; another added to what he had found out, which was the easier task. Future additions gave some completeness to their beginners. Those in the Greek church, which bear the names of Chrysostom and Basil, seem to be the first that ever extended themselves to the whole worship of the church; not that by them whose names they bear they were composed as now they appear, unless we shall think that they wrote them after their decease; but probably they collected some forms into order that had been by others invented; making such additions themselves as they judged needful, and so commended the use of them to the churches wherein they did preside. The use of them being arbitrarily introduced, was not by any injunction we find, made necessary. Much less did any one single form plead for a general necessity. In the Latin church, Ambrose used one form, Gregory another, and Isidore a third. Nor is it unlikely but the liturgies were as many as the episcopal churches of those days. Hence in the beginning of the fifth century, in an African council, Can. 70. which is the 103d. in the Codex Can. African; it is provided, that no prayers be read in the administration of the Eucharist, but such as have been approved in some council, or have been observed by some prudent men formerly; which canon, with some addition, is confirmed in the second Milenitan council, Can. 12. and the reason given in both is, lest there should any thing contrary to the faith, creep into their way of worship. But this, as I said, was in the beginning of the fifth century, after divers forms of administration of holy things in the church, had by divers been invented. The finding out of this invention was the act of some particular men, who have not been pleased to acquaint us with the reason of their undertaking. As yet it doth not appear unto us, that those

reasons could possibly be taken from the word, the practice of the apostles, or the churches by them planted, or those which followed them for some generations, nor from any council held before their days; and so it may be we are not much concerned to inquire what they were. Yet what is at present pleaded in the behalf of the first composers of liturgies may in the way be chiefly considered. Necessity is the first thing usually pretended. Many men being put into the office of the ministry, who had not gifts and abilities for the profitable discharge of the work of the ministry, unto the edification of the church, they who had the oversight of them according to the custom of those days, were enforced to compose such forms for their use as they judged expedient, so providing for the edification of the church, which else would have suffered from their weakness and insufficiency. Besides, many parts of the world, especially the east, in those days swarmed with antitrinitarian heretics of sundry sorts, who many of them by unsuspected wiles and dissimulations, and subscriptions of confessions, endeavoured to creep into the office of the ministry of the church partly out of blind zeal to diffuse the poison of their abominations, partly out of carnal policy to be made partakers of the advantages, which for the most part attended the orthodox profession. This increased the necessity of composing such forms of public worship, as being filled with expressions pointed against the errors of the times, might be a means to keep seducers from imposing themselves on ecclesiastical administrations. Thus there is no ancient liturgy, but it is full of the expressions that had been consented upon in the councils that were convened for the condemnation of those errors, which were in their days most rife and pernicious. On this ground do learned men of all sorts conclude the liturgy falsely ascribed to James to be younger than the Nicene and Ephesine councils, from the use of the words ὁμοούσιος and Θεοτόκος in it.

But it doth not yet appear that these reasons were sufficient to justify such an innovation in the churches of Christ. For supposing that there were such a decay of gifts and abilities among them that were called to the administration of gospel institutions, that they were not able to discharge their duty in that work to the edification

church, in like manner as those had done who went
ore them, this must needs have come to pass, either be-
se our Lord Jesus Christ did cease to give out his gifts
is church, as he had done in former days upon his usual
as; or that men were negligent and careless in the re-
ing of them from him, either not seeking them at his
d, or not exercising and improving of them according to
will and command. Other reason of this decay that I
w of, cannot be assigned. To affirm the former on any
ence whatever, is blasphemously to accuse our Lord
s Christ of breach of promise; he having solemnly en-
ed to be with his disciples, not for an age or two, but
he end of the world, and that by the graces and gifts of
Spirit. I know it is pretended, that when Christians
e multiplied, there was a necessity of appointing them
ers, who had not the gifts and qualifications that other-
e would have been esteemed necessary. But I know
hal, that it is impossible Christians should be multiplied
he way of Christ, faster than he is ready to give out gifts
their edification. The latter reason above then must be
nted to be the cause of the defect of abilities in church
ers, pleaded in the justification of the introduction into
church of composed forms of administrations to be read
them. I wish then we might, in the fear of the Lord,
sider whether the remedy were well suited unto the dis-
e. I suppose all impartial men will grant that there
ht to have been a return unto him endeavoured from
m they were gone astray, at least gospel means used for
obtaining of those gifts of Christ, and the improving of
n being received. Finding themselves at the loss
rein they were, should they not have searched their
rts and ways, to consider wherefore it was that the pre-
ce of Christ was so withdrawn from them, that they were
left without the assistance which others ministering in
ir places before them had received; should not they
e pulled out their single talent, and fallen to trading
h it, that it might have increased under their care? Was
this the remedy and cure of the breach made by them,
t God and man expected from them? Was it just then,
according to the mind of Christ, that instead of an hum-
returnal unto a holy evangelical dependence on himself,

they should invent an expedient to support them in the condition wherein they were, and so make all such returnal for hereafter needless? Yet this they did in the invention of liturgies, they found out a way to justify themselves in their spiritual negligence and sloth, and to render a dependence on the Lord Christ for supplies of his Spirit to enable them unto gospel administrations altogether needless, they had now provided themselves with an ability they could keep in the church, so that he might keep the furniture of his Spirit unto himself. And this quickly became the most poisonous ingredient in the apostacy of the latter times.

Nor is there any sufficient warrant for this invention in the second pretence. There were many antichrists in the apostles' time, yet they never thought of this engine for their discovery or exclusion out of the church; confessions of faith, or acknowledged forms of wholesome words with the care of the disciples of Christ, or his churches, which are enabled by him to judge and discern of truth and error, are the preservations against the danger intimated, that the gospel hath provided.

This being the entrance that the liturgies inquired after made into the churches of God, we are not much concerned to inquire what was their progress. That in the western parts of the world they all at length centred in the Roman mass-book and rituals we know. Their beginnings were small, plain, brief, their use arbitrary, the additions they received were from the endeavours of private men in several ages, occasional for the most part; the number of them great, equal to the various denominations of the churches, until the papal authority growing absolute and uncontrollable, the Roman form was imposed on the world, that by innumerable artifices in a long tract of ages was subjected thereunto, and that contrary to the determination of former Roman bishops, who advised the continuance of the different forms of administrations which were in use in several churches. 'Mihi placet, ut sive in Romanis sive in Galliarum partibus, seu in qualibet ecclesia aliquid invenisti quod plus Omnipotenti Deo possit placere sollicite eligas.' Greg. Resp. ad Interrogat. August.

This being the state and condition, this the issue, that the invention of liturgies to be read in the worship of God

s come unto, before the reformation, I shall briefly sub-
in unto it an account of what was done in these kingdoms
reference unto it, which will make way to the clear stating
the question in particular that we are farther to speak
to. The history of our reformation is known. I shall
t speak any thing that may reflect with the least disho-
ur on the work or the workmen. We have abundant
se to bless the Lord continually for the one and the
er. Yet still we must remember that our reformers were
n, and that the reformation was a work performed by
n. The former never claimed infallibility, nor the latter,
t I know of, perfection; so that some things that were
e by the one, and in the other, may admit of new con-
erations without the reflection of any thing upon them,
t the one and the other would not readily and willingly
mit. I shall therefore briefly give an account of that
t of the work which concerns our business in hand.
hat was the state of this nation at the time of the refor-
tion, and what were the minds of the greater part of men
them, in reference unto the work, is sufficiently declared
all the stories of those days. God having been pleased
send the saving light of the gospel into the minds and
rts of them in chief rule, that is King Edward, and some
his counsellors, they found no small difficulties to wrestle
thal, in dealing with the inveterate prejudices wherewith
e generality of men were possessed against the work they
ended. The far greater part of the clergy, true to their
nal present interest, with all their might and cunning
posed their endeavours. The greatest part of the nobility
erse to their proceedings. The body of the people blinded
h superstition and profaneness, easily excited by the
ests (whose peculiar concernment lay in keeping all
ngs in their old channel and course) to make head against
ir proceedings. Foreign nations round about fomenting
the uttermost all home-bred discontents, and offering
mselves by the instigation of the pope, to hinder the work
all ways that possibly they could imagine. Amongst
these the body of the people, which are the king's most
cial care, as they are his strength and wealth, were
ked on as most to be regarded, as without whose con-
rence their discontents of all others were likely only to

consume themselves. Now the people being in those days very ignorant, and unacquainted with the doctrines of the Scripture, were very little or not at all concerned what persuasion men were of in religion, as to the articles of purity belief, so as they might retain the 'agenda' in the worship of God which they had been accustomed unto. Hence it was that those prelates, who were the instruments of the papal persecution in this nation, wisely stated the whole cause of their cruelty to be the mass, or the worship of the church seldom unless compelled by disputations once mentioning of the articles of faith, which yet they knew to be the main foundation of the difference between themselves and the reformers; because in this particular they had the advantage of the popular favour; the people violently interposing themselves in the behalf of that part of the present religion wherein their only share did lie. Had they laid the reasons and grounds of their quarrel in the differences of opinions about the 'credenda' of the gospel, they would scarcely have prevailed with the common people to carry fagot for the burning of their brethren, for things whereof they understood little or nothing at all.

Our wise and provident reformers considering this state of things, and temper of the minds of men, however they resolvedly declared for the 'credenda' of the gospel, and asserted the articles of faith from which the Roman church had most eminently apostatized, yet found it their concernment to attemper the way of public worship as much as possible with consistency with the articles of the faith they professed, to that which the popularity had been inured unto. Observing plainly that all their concernments in religion lay in the outward worship whereunto they had been accustomed, having very confused apprehensions of the speculative part of it, it was easy for them to apprehend that if they could condescend to furnish them with such a way thereof as might comply in some reasonable manner with their former usage, these two things would ensue. First, That the main reformation in the doctrine which alone would deliver the people from their prejudicate opinions about the worship of God, would be carried on with less noise and observation, and consequently less contest and opposition. For whilst they had a way and form of worship proposed to them wherewith they

could be contented, those that were wiser might believe and teach what they pleased, which in the providence of God proved in a short time a blessed means of delivering them from their old entanglements and darkness. Secondly, That their priests who were the chief instigators to all disorder and opposition to the whole work of reformation, finding a way proposed for their continuance in the possession of their places, and a worship prescribed which they could as easily perform and go through withal, as what they had practised in former days, might possibly acquiesce in the proceedings of their betters, finding the temporal interest which they chiefly respected, to be saved. And this afterward accordingly they did, reading the service-book instead of the mass, without which supply of such wants and defects in them as I shall not name, they would never have entertained any thoughts of owning the reformation, nor of suffering the people to submit themselves thereunto. On these considerations, and for these ends, it is evident from the story of those times, that our present liturgy was framed. Rejecting out of the offices before in use, such things as were directly contrary to the articles of faith protested in the reformation in hand, translating of what remained into English, with such supplies and alterations as the rejection of those things before mentioned made necessary: the book mentioned in some haste, and with some other disadvantages for such a work, was by our first reformers compiled. And indeed somewhat there was in this case not much unlike that insisted on in the entrance of this discourse, between the believing Jews and Gentiles. Many of the Jews who were willing to receive Christ's reformation in point of faith and obedience, yet pertinaciously adhered to their old ceremonious worship; violently setting themselves against any that durst speak a word against its continuance. That there might not be an endless contest and strife about the matter, and so the progress of the gospel be hindered amongst the one sort and the other, the apostles taking in hand the old worship, as to the Gentile worshippers whose case above same then under consideration, they reject and declare abrogate all such ceremonies whose necessary observation had an inconsistency with the doctrine of the gospel, proposing

only some few things to be observed, which occasioned the greatest difference between the parties at variance.

Now as this composition of that difference was accommodated to the present scandal, and the obligation unto its observation to be regulated thereby; so by the removal thereof, itself as unto any use in the church of Christ did expire. Not unlike unto this of the apostle seems the aim of our first reformers to have been, that they might win the people who had been accustomed to the way of worship in use in the papacy unto a compliance with the doctrine of the gospel, and that there might not be endless contests about that which was presently to be practised, which perhaps they thought of small importance in comparison of those weighty fundamental truths which they had endeavoured to acquaint them with, and bring them to the belief of, they provided for the use of such parts of it, and in such a manner, as were not openly inconsistent with the truths which was in their hearts to communicate unto them. And it is not imposaible but that this constitution might have had the same end with the other, if not of present use, being of things of another nature, yet of a timely expiration, when notoriously useless as to the main ends intended in it, had not the interest of some interposed for its continuance beyond the life and influence of all or any of those causes or occasions. And hence it is that those streams at this day run strongly and fiercely, by the addition and pouring into of adventitious rivulets, with showers or rather storms of temporal interest, whose springs are all utterly long since dried up.

The book of Common Prayer being composed as hath been declared, became from its very cradle and infancy a bone of contention to the church of God in this nation. Many of the people and ministers who seemed to be enlightened with a beam of truth, of an equal lustre and brightness with that which shined in the minds of their brethren, wholly decried that prudential compliance with the people's ignorance and adherence to popery, which was openly avowed in the composition and imposition of it, and called earnestly for a purer way of the administrations of gospel ordinances more agreeable to the word and primitive times, than they apprehended that prescribed form to con-

tain and exhibit. Others again in the justification of that whereof themselves were the authors, laboured to recommend the book, not only as to truth, but as useful and very beneficial for the edification of the church. It is known also that the contests of men in this nation about this form of divine service, were not confined to this nation, but were carried by them into other parts of the world. And should I pursue the suffrage that hath lain against it, from the first day of its composure to this wherein we live, never giving it a quiet possession in the minds and consciences of men, with the various evils that have all along attended its imposition, I suppose it might of itself prevail with sober men who desire their moderation should be known to all, because the Judge standeth at the door, to take the whole matter of the imposition of this or the like form once more under a sedate consideration. And they may perhaps be the rather induced thereunto, if they will but impartially weigh that the opposition to the imposed liturgy hath increased daily according to the increase of light and gospel gifts among men. So that there seems to be no way to secure its station, but by an opposition unto them, and extirpation of them, which is a sad work for any that are called Christians to engage into.

I presume the conscientious reader will be able to discover, from what hath been spoken, rules sufficient to guide his judgment in reference unto the use of prescribed liturgies. The story of their rise and progress is enough to plead for a liberty from an indispensable necessity of their observation. That which is of pure human invention, and comparatively of late and uncertain original, whose progress hath been attended with much superstition and persecution, stands in need of very cogent reasons to plead for its continuance. For others will not outbalance the evils that are asserted to flow from it. But it may be this will not suffice with some for a final decision and determination of this difference. I shall therefore briefly state the question about them, which only I shall speak unto, and try their use and usefulness by that infallible rule by which both we and they must be judged another day.

CHAP. VII.

The question stated. First argument against the composing and imposi of liturgies. Arbitrary additions to the worship of God reject Liturgies not appointed by God. Made necessary in their imposin and a part of the worship of God. Of circumstances of worship. stituted adjuncts of worship not circumstances. Circumstances of acti as such, not circumstances of worship. Circumstances commanded parts of worship. Prohibitions of additions produced, considered, plied.

To clear up what it is in particular that we insist upon, so few things are to be premised. 1. Then, I do not in espec intend the Liturgy now in use in England, any farther th to make it an instance of such imposed liturgies, whereof treat. I shall not then at all inquire what footing it hath the law, how nor when established, nor what particular fi ings are pleaded to be in it, nor what conformity it be with the Roman offices, with the like things that are usua objected against it. Nor, secondly, do I oppose the dir tive part of this liturgy as to the reading of the Scriptu when it requires that which is Scripture to be read, the ministration of the ordinances by Christ appointed, nor composition of forms of prayer suited to the nature of institutions to which they relate, so they be not imposed the administrators of them, to be read precisely as scribed. But, thirdly, This is that alone which I shall sp unto; the composing of forms of prayer in the worshi God, in all gospel administrations, to be used by the mi ters of the churches, in all public assemblies, by a pre reading of the words prescribed unto them; with comma for the reading of other things, which they are not to e upon the penalty contained in the sanction of the wh service and the several parts of it. The liberty which m say is granted, for a man to use his own gifts and abili in prayer before and after sermons, will, I fear, as things stand, upon due consideration appear rather to be ta than given. However it concerns not our present quest *because* it is taken for granted by those that plead for

strict observation of a book, that the whole gospel worship of God in the assemblies of Christians, may be carried on and performed without any such preaching as is prefaced with the liberty pretended.

These things being premised, I shall subjoin some of the reasons that evidently declare the imposition and use of such a liturgy or form of public words, to be contrary to the rule of the word, and consequently sinful.

First, The arbitrary invention of any thing, with commands for its necessary and indispensable use in the public worship of God, as a part of that worship, and the use of any thing so invented and so commanded in that worship, is unlawful and contrary to the rule of the word; but of this nature is the liturgy we treat of. It is an invention of men, not appointed, not commanded of God; it is commanded to be used in the public worship of God, by reading the several parts of it, according to the occasions that they respect; and that indispensably; and is made a part of that worship.

There are three things affirmed in the assumption concerning the Liturgy. First, That it is not appointed or commanded of God, i. e. there is no command of God either for the use of this or that liturgy in particular, nor in general that any such should so be, and be so used as is pleaded. And this we must take for granted, until some instance of such command be produced. Secondly, That it is made necessary by virtue of the commands of men, to be used in the public worship of God. About this there will be no difference. Let it be denied, and there is an end of all this strife. I shall not dispute about other men's practice. They who are willing to take it upon their consciences, that the best way to serve God in the church, or the best ability that they have for the discharge of their duty therein, consists in the reading of such a book (for I suppose they will grant that they ought to serve God with the best they have), shall not by me be opposed in their way and practice. It is only about its imposition, and the necessity of its observance by virtue of that imposition, that we discourse. Now the present command is, that such a liturgy be always used in the public worship of God, and that without the use or reading of it, *the ordinances of* the gospel be not administered

at any time, nor in any place; with strong pleas for the obligation arising from that command, making the omissions of its observance to be sinful. It is then utterly impossible that any thing should be more indispensably necessary, than the reading of the Liturgy in the worship of God is. It is said, indeed, that it is not commanded as though in itself it were necessary; either a prescribed liturgy, or this or that, for then it were sin in any not to use it, whether it were commanded by the church or not, but for order, uniformity, conveniency, and the preventing of sundry evils that would otherwise ensue, it is commanded; which command makes the observation of it necessary unto us. But we are not as yet inquiring what are the reasons of its imposition. They may afterward be spoken unto: and time also may be taken to shew, that it were much more tolerable, if men would plead for the necessity of the things which it seems good unto them to command, and on that ground to command their observance, than granting them not necessary in themselves, to make them necessary to be observed merely by virtue of their commands, for reasons which they say satisfy themselves, but come short of giving satisfaction to them from whom obedience is required. For whereas the will of man can be no way influenced unto obedience, but by mere acknowledged sovereignty or conviction of reason in and from the things themselves, commands in and about things wherein they own not that the commanders have an absolute sovereignty (as God hath in all things, the civil supreme magistrate in things civil that are good and lawful), nor can they find the reasons of the things themselves cogent, are a yoke which God hath not designed the sons of men to bear. But it is concerning the necessary use of the Liturgy in the worship of God that we are disputing, which I suppose will not be denied.

It remaineth then to consider whether the use of the Liturgy as prescribed be made a part of the worship of God. Now that wherewith and whereby God is commanded to be worshipped, and without which all observation or performance of his public worship is forbidden, is itself made a part of his worship. The command with This, or thus, shall you worship God, makes the observation of that command a part of God's worship. It is said that it is only a circum-

stance of worship, but no part of it. Prayer is the worship of God; but that this prayer shall be used and no other, is only a circumstance of it. So that though it may be possibly accounted a circumstance, or accidentary part of God's worship, yet it is not asserted to be of the substance of it. How far this is so, and how far it is otherwise must be considered. Circumstances are either such as follow actions as actions, or such as are arbitrarily superadded and adjoined by command unto actions, which do not of their own accord, nor naturally, nor necessarily attend them. Now religious actions in the worship of God, are actions still. Their religious relation doth not destroy their natural being. Those circumstances then which do attend such actions as actions, not determined by divine institution, may be ordered, disposed of, and regulated by the prudence of men. For instance, prayer is a part of God's worship. Public prayer is so, as appointed by him. This as it is an action to be performed by man, cannot be done without the assignment of time and place, and sundry other things, if order and conveniency be attended. These are circumstances that attend all actions, of that nature, to be performed by a community, whether they relate to the worship of God or no. These men may according as they see good regulate, and change, as there is occasion: I mean they may do so, who are acknowledged to have power in such things. As the action cannot be without them, so their regulation is arbitrary if they come not under some divine disposition and order; as that of time in general doth. There are also some things, which some men call circumstances also, that no way belong of themselves to the actions whereof they are said to be the circumstances, nor do attend them, but are imposed on them, or annexed unto them, by the arbitrary authority of those who take upon them to give order and rules in such cases. Such is to pray before an image, or towards the east, or to use this or that form of prayer in such gospel administrations and no other. These are not circumstances attending the nature of the thing itself, but are arbitrarily superadded to the things that they are appointed to accompany. Whatever men may call such additions, they are no less parts of the whole wherein they serve, than the things themselves whereunto they are adjoined. The schoolmen

tell us, that that which is made so the condition of an action, that without it the action is not to be done, is not a circumstance of it, but such an adjunct as is a necessary part. But not to contend about the word; such additionals that are called circumstantial, are made parts of worship, as are made necessary by virtue of command to be observed. Sacrifices of old were the instituted worship of God. That they should be offered at the tabernacle or temple at Jerusalem, and nowhere else, was a circumstance appointed to be observed in their offerings; and yet this circumstance was no less a part of God's worship, than the sacrifice itself. In the judgment of most men not only prayer, and the matter of our prayer, is appointed by our Saviour in the Lord's Prayer, but we are commanded also to use the very words of it. I desire to know whether the precise use of these words be not a part of God's worship? It seems that it is: for that which is commanded by Christ to be used in the worship of God, is a part of God's worship. The case is the same here. Prayer is commanded; and the use of these prayers is commanded; the latter distinctly, as such, as well as the former, is made a part of God's worship. Nor is there any ground for that distinction of the circumstantial or accidentary part of God's worship, and worship substantially taken, or the substantial parts of it. The worship of God is either moral or instituted. The latter contains the peculiar ways and manner of exerting the former according to God's appointment. The actions whereby these are jointly discharged, or the inward moral principles of worship are exerted in and according to the outward institutions, have their circumstances attending them. These in themselves nakedly considered, have in them neither good nor evil; nor are any circumstances in the worship of God, much less circumstantial parts of his worship, but only circumstances of those actions as actions, whereby it is performed. And whatever is instituted of God, in and about those circumstances, is a substantial part of his worship.

Nor is the prescribing of such a form of prayer a regulation of those circumstances of public prayer, for decency, order, and uniformity, which attend it as a public action, but the superaddition of an adjunct condition, with which it is to be performed, and without which it is not to be per-

formed as it is prayer, the worship of God. Of this nature was sacrificing of old on the altar at the tabernacle or temple, and there alone. And many more instances of the like nature may be given. Praising of God, and blessing of the people were parts of the worship of God, appointed by himself to be performed by the priests under the law. In the doing thereof at certain seasons, they were commanded to use some forms of words prescribed unto them for that purpose. Not only hereby the praising and blessing of God, but the use of those forms in so doing became necessary part of the worship of God. And so was the use of organs and the like instruments of music, which respect that manner of praising him which God then required. The case is here no otherwise. Prayers and thanksgivings in the administration of the ordinances of the gospel are of the instituted worship of God. Unto these, as to the manner of their performance, is the imposition of the liturgical forms spoken of superadded; and their use made a necessary adjunct of the duty itself, so as that it may not be performed without them; which makes them a no less necessary part of the worship of God, than any of his institutions of old were, which related to the circumstances and the manner of his worship, as the temple, tabernacle, altar, forms of thanksgiving, and confession, composed and prescribed by the Holy Ghost himself.

But I suppose this will not be much gainsaid; by some it is acknowledged in express terms, and for the matter of fact, we find that the reading of a book of service, is with many taken not to be a part, but the whole of the worship of God, which if it be done, they suppose God is acceptably worshipped without more ado; and if it be omitted, whatever else be done in the room of it, that God is not worshipped at all.

Our inquiry then must be, whether such additions to or in the worship of God, besides or beyond his own institution and appointment, be allowable, or lawful to be practised. I shall first recite the words in general of some testimonies that lie against such a practice, and then consider what they most particularly speak unto. Of this sort are Exod. xx. 4, 5. 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is

in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,' &c. Deut. iv. 2. 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.' Chap. xii. 32. 'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.' Prov. xxx. 6. 'Add not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.' Jer. vii. 31. 'They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.' Matt. xv. 9. 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' Ver. 13. 'Every plant which my Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.' Also, Mark vii. 7, 8. Rev. xxii. 18. 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.' The mind of God in these and the like prohibitions, the reader may find exemplified, Lev. x. 1—4, &c. Josh. xxii. 10, &c. Judg. viii. 24. 1 Chron. xv. 13. 2 Kings xvi. 11, 12. and in other places.

Men who having great abilities of learning, are able to distinguish themselves from under the power of the most express rules and commands, should yet, methinks, out of a sense of their weakness (which they are ready to profess themselves convinced of when occasion is offered to deliver their thoughts concerning them), have compassion for those, who being not able to discern the strength of their reasonings because of their fineness, are kept in a conscientious subjection to the express commands of God, especially conceiving them not without some cogent cause reiterated.

But lest the present exasperation of the spirits of men should frustrate that hope and expectation, let us consider what is the precise intendment of the testimonies produced, being we have reason to look well to the justice of our cause in the first place; which being cleared, we may the better be satisfied in coming short of favour where it may not be obtained. The places of Scripture produced, are taken partly out of the Old Testament, partly out of the New. And I

suppose it will be granted that there is an equal force of rule in the one as in the other. For though these in the Old Testament had their peculiar respect to the worship that was then instituted, yet they had not as then instituted but as the worship which God himself had appointed. And therefore their general force abides whilst God requires any worship at the hands of men; unless it may be made appear that God hath parted with that prerogative of being the appointer of his own worship, now under the New Testament, which he so vindicated unto himself under the Old. Take them then in their general aim and intention, that which these and the like testimonies unanimously speak unto us is this, That the will of God is the sole rule of his worship, and all the concernment of it, and that his authority is the sole principle and cause of the relation of any thing to his worship, in a religious manner; and consequently that he never did, nor ever will, allow that the wills of his creatures should be the rule or measure of his honour or worship, nor that their authority should cause any thing to hold a new relation unto him, or any other but what it hath by the law of its creation. And this is the sum and substance of the second commandment, wherein so great a cloud of expositors do centre their thoughts, that it will not be easy for any to withstand them, so that the other texts produced are express to all the particulars of the assertion laid down, may be easily evinced.

3. That the Lord asserts his own authority and will as the constituting cause and rule of all his worship, was the first thing asserted. His repetition of 'my words,' what 'I have commanded,' and the like expressions, secure this enclosure. Unless men can pretend that there is the same reason of the words and commands of God himself, it is in vain for them to pretend a power of instituting any thing in the worship of God: for the formal reason of every such institution is, that the word of it is the word of God. It is enough to discard any thing from a relation to the worship of God, to manifest that the appointers of it were men, and not God. Nor can any man prove that God hath delegated unto them his power in this matter. Nor did he ever do so to any of the sons of men; namely, that they should have authority to appoint any thing in his worship, or about it, that seemeth

meet unto their wisdom. With some, indeed, in former days he intrusted the work of revealing unto his church and people what he himself would have observed, which dispensation he closed in the person of Christ and his apostles. But to intrust men with authority not to declare what he revealed, but to appoint what seemeth good unto them, he never did it, the testimonies produced lie evidently against it. Now surely God's asserting his own will and authority as the only rule and cause of his worship, should make men cautious how they suppose themselves like or equal unto him herein, especially being destitute of warrant from the approved example or president of any that have gone before them. If the example of any one in the Old or New Testament could be produced, that of his own mind and authority made any such additions to the worship of God, as that which we treat about, by virtue of any trust or power pretended from or under him, and found acceptance in his so doing, or that was not severely rebuked for his sin therein, some countenance would seem to be given unto those that at present walk in such paths; although I suppose it would not be easy for them to prove any particular instances, which might have peculiar exemption from the general law, which we know not, to be a sufficient warrant for their proceedings: But whereas God himself having instituted his own worship and all the concernments of it, doth also assert his own authority and will as the sole cause and rule of all the worship that he will accept, no instance being left on record of any one that ever made any additions to what he had appointed, on any pretence whatever, or by virtue of any authority whatever that was accepted with him: and whereas the most eminent of those who have assumed that power to themselves, as also of the judgment of the reasons, necessary for the exerting of it, as to matter and manner, have been given up in the righteous judgment of God to do things not convenient, yea, abominable unto him (as in the papal church), it is not unlikely to be the wisdom of men to be very cautious of intruding themselves into this thankless office.

But such is the corrupt nature of man, that there is scarce any thing whereabout men have been more apt to contend with God from the foundation of the world. That their will *and wisdom* may have a share (some at least) in the ordering

his worship, is that which of all things they seem to desire. Wherefore to obviate their pride and folly, to his asserting of his own prerogative in this matter, he subjoins severe inhibitions against all or any man's interposing therein; so as to take away any thing by him commanded, or to add any thing to what is by him appointed. This also the testimonies recited fully express. The prohibition is plain, 'Thou shalt not add to what I have commanded.' Add not to his words, that is, in his worship to the things which by his word he hath appointed to be observed; neither to the word of his institution, nor to the things instituted. Indeed adding things adds to the word; for the word that adds is made of a like authority with his. All making to ourselves is forbidden, though what we so make may seem unto us to tend to the furtherance of the worship of God. It is said men may add nothing to the substance of the worship of God, but they may order, dispose, and appoint the things that belong to the manner and circumstances of it, and this is all that is done in the prescription of liturgies. Of circumstances in and about the worship of God we have spoken before, and removed that pretence. Nor is it safe distinguishing in the things of God, where himself hath not distinguished. When he gave out the prohibitions mentioned under the Old Testament, he was appointing or had appointed his whole worship, and all that belonged unto it, in matter and manner, way and order, substance and circumstance. Indeed there is nothing in its whole nature, as it belongs to the general being of things, so circumstantial, but that if it be appointed by God in his worship, it becomes a part of the substance of it; nor can any thing that is not so appointed ever by any be made a circumstance of his worship, though many things are circumstances of those actions, which in his worship are performed. This distinction then directly makes void the command, so that conscience cannot acquiesce in it. Besides, we have shewed that liturgies prescribed and imposed, are necessary parts of God's worship, and so not to be salved by this distinction.

Moreover, to testify what weight be laid on the observance of these general prohibitions, when men found out other ways of worship than what he had appointed, though the *particulars were such* as fell under other special inter-

dictions, yet the Lord was pleased to place the great aggravation of their sin in the contempt of those general rules mentioned. This is that he urgeth them with, That they did things by him not appointed; of not observing any thing in religion, but what he requires, that he presseth them withal. The command is general. You shall add nothing to what I have instituted; and the aggravation of the sin pressed by him relates not to the particular nature of it, but to this general command or prohibition; 'You have done what I commanded you not.' That the particular evil condemned was also against other special commands of God, is merely accidental to the general nature of the crime they were urged withal. And whereas God hath given out these rules and precepts, 'You shall do whatever I command you, and according as I command you, you shall add nothing thereunto, nor take any therefrom;' can the transgression of this rule be any otherwise expressed, but thus: 'They did the thing which he commanded not, nor did it ever come into his heart.'

It is said that the intention of these rules and prohibitions, is only to prevent the additions of what is contrary to what God hath appointed, and not of that which may tend to the furtherance and better discharge of his appointments. The usual answer to this acception is, That whatever is added, is contrary to what is commanded, though not in this or that particular command, yet to that command that nothing be added. It is not the nature of any particular that is condemned, but the power of adding, in those prohibitions. Let us see then whether of these senses have the fairest evidence with the evident purport and intention of the rules, precepts, and prohibitions under consideration.

Our Lord Jesus Christ directs his apostles to teach his disciples 'to do and observe whatever he commanded them.' Those who contend for the latter interpretation of these and the like precepts before mentioned, affirm that there is in these words a restriction of the matter of their commission, to the express commands of Christ. What he commands, they say, they were to teach men to observe, and nothing else, nor will he require the observance of aught else at our hands. The others would have his intention to be, whatever *he commanded*, and whatever seemeth good to them to com-

nd, so it be not contrary unto what was by him com-
nded. As if he had said, Teach men to observe whatever
mmand them, and command you them to observe what-
r you think meet, so it be not contrary to my commands.
tainly this gloss at first view seems to defeat the main
ndment of Christ, in that express limitation of their com-
sion unto his own commands. So also under the Old
tament; giving order about his worship, the Lord lets
ses know that he must do all things according to what
should shew and reveal unto him. In the close of the
rk committed unto him, to shew what he had done was
eptable to God, it is eight or ten times repeated, that he
all as the Lord commanded him: nothing was omitted,
hing added by him. That the same course might be ob-
ved in the following practice, which was taken in the
t institution, the Lord commands that nothing be added
what was so appointed by him; nothing diminished from
The whole duty then of the church, as unto the worship
God, seems to lie in the precise observation of what is
ointed and commanded by him. To assert things may
dded to the worship of God, not by him appointed, which
the judgment of those that add them, seem useful for the
ter performance of what he hath appointed, so that they
not contrary unto them, seems to defeat the whole end
l intention of God in all those rules and prohibitions; if
ter the occasion, rise, cause of them, or their commend-
e observance be considered. On these and no better
as is that prescribed liturgy we treat of introduced and
osed. It comes from man, with authority to be added to
worship that Christ requires, and ventures on all the
re interdictions of such additions, armed only with the
tence of not being contrary to any particular command,
he matter of it (which yet is denied), and such distinc-
s as have not the least ground in Scripture, or in the
on of the things themselves, which it is applied unto.
ght we divert into particulars, it were easy to demonstrate
the instances given in the Scripture of God's rejection
uch additions, do abundantly obviate all the pleas that
insisted on, for the waving of the general prohibition.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the authority needful for the constituting and ordering of any thing that is to have relation to God and his worship. Of the power and authority of civil magistrates. The power imposing the Liturgy. The formal reason of religious obedience. Use of the Liturgy an act of civil and religious obedience; Matt. xxviii. 20. *No rule to judge of what is meet in the worship of God, but his word.*

BESIDES the regulation of all our proceedings and actions in the worship of God, by the command and prohibitions insisted on in the foregoing chapter, there are two things indispensably necessary to render the prescription of any thing in religious worship allowable, or lawful to be observed, both pointed unto by the testimonies produced. And these are, first, An authority to enjoin; and, secondly, A certain rule to try the injunction by.

The worship of God is of that nature, that whatsoever is performed in it is an act of religious obedience. That any thing may be esteemed such, it is necessary that the conscience be in it subject to the immediate authority of God. His authority alone renders any act of obedience religious. All authority is originally in God, and there are two ways whereby he is pleased to exert it. First, By a delegation of authority unto some persons for some ends and purposes, which they being invested withal, may command in their own names an observance of the things about which by God's appointment their authority is to be exercised. Thus is it with kings and rulers of the earth. They are powers ordained of God, having authority given them by him. And being invested with power, they give out their commands for the doing or performing of such or such things whereunto their authority doth extend. That they ought to be obeyed in things good and lawful, doth not arise from the authority vested in themselves, but from the immediate command of God, that in such things they ought to be obeyed. Hence obedience in general unto magistrates is a part of our moral and religious obedience unto God as it respects his command, whatever the nature and object of it be. But the performance of particular actions, wherein by their determination our obedience exerts itself, being resolved into

that authority which is vested in them, is not religious, but civil obedience, any otherwise than as in respect of its general nature it relates to the command of God in general. No act, I say, that we perform, whereof this is the formal reason, that it is appointed and commanded by man, though that man be intrusted with power from God to appoint and require acts of that nature, is an act of religious obedience unto God in itself, because it relates not immediately to his divine authority requiring that act.

Secondly, God doth exert his authority immediately, and that either directly from heaven, as in the giving of the law, or by the inspiration of others to declare his will; unto both which his word written answereth. Now whatever is done in obedience to the authority of God thus exerting itself, is a part of that religious duty which we owe to God, whether it be in his first institution and appointment, or any duty in its primitive revelation, or whether it be in the commands he gives for the observation of what he hath formerly appointed. For when God hath commanded any things to be observed in his worship, though he design and appoint men to see them observed accordingly, and furnish them with the authority of commanding to that purpose, yet the interposition of that authority of men, though by God's institution, doth not at all hinder, but that the duty performed is religious obedience, relating directly to the will and command of God. The power commanding in the case we have in hand is man's, not that of the Lord: for though it be acknowledged that those who do command have their authority from God; yet, unless the thing commanded be also in particular appointed by God, the obedience that is yielded is purely civil, and not religious. This is the state of the matter under consideration. The commanding and imposing power is variously apprehended. Some say it is the church that doth it, and so assert the authority to be ecclesiastical; every church, say they, hath power to order things of this nature for order and decency sake. When it is inquired what the church is that they intend, there some are at a loss, and would feign insinuate somewhat into our thoughts that they dare not openly assert and maintain. The truth is, the church in this sense is the king, or the king and parliament, by whose advice he exerts his legislative power. By their

authority was the liturgy composed, or it was composed without authority: by their authority it must be imposed if it be imposed; what is or was done in the preparation of it by others, unto their judgment hath no more influence into the authoritative imposition of it, when the act of a person learned in the law, drawing up a bill for the consideration of parliament, hath into its binding law power, when confirmed. In this sense we acknowledge the power ordaining and imposing this liturgy to be of God, to be good and lawful, to be obeyed unto the utmost extent of that obedience which to man can be due, and that upon the account of the institution and command of God himself. But yet supposing the liturgy to fall within the precincts and limits of that obedience, yet the observance and use of it being not commanded of God, is purely an act of civil obedience, and not religious, wherein the conscience lies in no immediate subjection to Jesus Christ. It is of the same general nature with the honest discharge of the office of a constable: and this seems inconsistent with the nature of the worship of God.

But whatever be the immediate imposing power, we have direction as to our duty in the last injunction of our blessed Saviour to his apostles, Matt. xxviii. 20. 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded.' In things which concern the worship of God, the commanding power is Christ; and his command the adequate rule and measure of our obedience. The teaching, commanding, and enjoining of others to do and observe those commands, is the duty of those intrusted with Christ's authority under him. Their commission to teach and enjoin, and our duty to do and observe, have the same rules, the same measure, bounds, and limits. What they teach and enjoin beyond what Christ hath commanded, they do it not by virtue of any commission from him; what we do beyond what he hath commanded, we do it not in obedience to him; what they so teach, they do it in their own name, not his; what we so do, we do in our own strength, not his, nor to his glory. The answer of Bellarmine to that argument of the Protestant divines from this place, against the impositions of his church, is the most weak and frivolous that I think ever any learned man was forced to make use of; and yet where to find better will not easily occur. Our Lord Jesus Christ saith, 'Go and teach

men to do and observe whatever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you;' to which he subjoins, 'It is true, but yet we are bound also to obey them that are set over us, that is our church guides;' and so leaves the argument as sufficiently discharged. Now the whole question is concerning what those church guides may teach and enjoin, whereunto we are to give obedience which is here expressly restrained to the things commanded by Christ; to which the cardinal offers not one word. The things our Saviour treats about are principally the 'agenda' of the gospel, things to be done and observed in the worship of God. Of these, as was said, he makes his own command the adequate rule and measure. 'Teach men to observe πάντα ὅσα all whatsoever I command;' in their so doing alone, doth he promise his presence with them, that is, to enable them unto the discharge of their duty. He commands, I say, all that shall to the end of the world be called to serve him in the work of the gospel, to teach. In that expression he compriseth their whole duty, as their whole authority is given them in this commission. In their teaching, indeed, they are to command with all authority; and upon the non-obedience of men unto their teaching, either by not receiving their word, or by walking unworthy of it when it is received in the profession of it, he hath allotted them the course of their whole proceedings; but still requiring that all be regulated by what they are originally commissionated and enabled to teach and command. Let then the imposition of a liturgy be tried by this rule. It was never by Christ commanded to his apostles, cannot by any be taught as his command, and therefore men, in the teaching or imposing of it, have no promise of his presence, nor do they that observe it, yield any obedience unto him therein. This I am sure will be the rule of Christ's inquiry at his great visitation at the last day; the things which himself hath commanded will be inquired after, as to some men's teachings, and all men's observation, and those only. And I cannot but admire with what peace and satisfaction to their own souls, men can pretend to act as by commission from Christ, as the chief administrators of his gospel and worship on the earth, and make it their whole business almost to teach men to do and observe what he never commanded, and rigorously to inquire after and into

the observation of their own commands, whilst those of the Lord Jesus are openly neglected.

But let the authority of men for imposition be supposed to equal the fancy of any, who through ignorance or interest are most devoted unto it, when they come to put their authority into execution, commanding things in and about the worship of God, I desire to know by what rule they are to proceed in their so doing. All the actions of men are or ought to be regular: good or evil they are, as they answer to or dissent from their proper rule. The rule in this matter must be the word of God, or their own prudence. Allow the former to be the rule, that is, revealing what they ought to command, and there is a total end of this difference. What a rule the latter is like to prove is easy to conjecture; but there is no need of conjectures where experience interposeth. The great philosopher is blamed by some for inserting the determination of men wise and prudent into his definition of the rule of moral virtue. For, they say, that cannot be certainly known whose rule and measure is fluctuating and uncertain. If there be ground for this assertion in reference to moral virtues, whose seed and principles are inlaid in the nature of man; how much more is that rule to be questioned, when applied to things whose spring and foundation lies merely in supernatural revelation? How various, uncertain, and tumultuating, how roving this pretended rule is like to prove, how short it comes to any one single property of a sufficient rule, much more of all things that are necessary to complete a rule of prorocecome in such cases, were easy to demonstrate. What good and useful place that is like to obtain in the worship of God, which having its rise in the authority of man, is framed by the rule of the wisdom of man, and so wholly resolved into his will, I may say will be one day judged and determined, but that it is so already sufficiently in the word of truth.

CHAP. IX.

ment second. Necessary use of the Liturgy exclusive of the use of the means appointed by Christ for the edification of his church.

proceed to some farther considerations upon the state
ie question before laid down; and shall insist on some
r argument against the imposition pleaded for. We
spoken to the authority imposing; our next argument
ken from the thing or matter imposed, and the end of
imposition.

A human provision of means for the accomplishing of
end or ends in the worship of God, for which Jesus
st himself hath made and doth continue to make pro-
n, to the exclusion of that provision so by him made, is
allowable. About this assertion I suppose we shall
no contention. To assert the lawfulness of such pro-
ns, is in the first instance to exalt the wisdom and au-
ity of men, above that of Christ, and that in his own
e. This men will not nakedly and openly do, though
st consequence it be done every day. But we have
red our proposition by the plainness of its terms,
st which no exception can lie. It remaineth then that
how, that the things mentioned in it, and rejected as
lowable, are directly applicable to the imposition of
gies contended about.

That the prescription of the Liturgy, to be used as pre-
ed, is the provision of a means for the accomplishing
me ends in the worship of God, the judgment and the
tice of those who contend for it, do sufficiently declare.
e ends, or this end (to sum up all in one) is, That the
nances and institutions of Christ may be quickly ad-
stered and solemnized in the church with decency and
r unto the edification of the assemblies wherein it is
. I suppose none will deny this to be the end intended
s imposition; it is so pleaded continually; nor is there
other that I know of assigned. Now of the things
tioned it is the last that is the principal end; namely,
dification of the church, which is aimed at for its own

sake, and so regulates the whole procedure of mere mediums, and those that are so mediums as also to be esteemed subordinate ends. Such are decency and order, or uniformity. These have not their worth from themselves, nor do they influence the intention of the liturgists for their own sakes, but as they tend unto edification. And this the apostolical rule expressly requireth, 1 Cor. xiv. The prescription then of a liturgy is a provision for the right administration of the ordinances of the gospel unto the edification of the church. This is its general nature; and in the administration of the ordinances of the gospel, consists the chief and main work of the ministry. That this provision is human, hath been before declared. It was not made by Christ, nor his apostles; but of men, and by men was it made and imposed on the disciples of Christ. It remaineth then that we consider whether Jesus Christ have not made provision for the same end and purpose; namely, that the ordinances and institutions of the gospel may be administered to the edification of the church. Now this the apostle expressly affirms, Eph. iv. 7—13. 'Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.—He gave—some pastors and teachers; for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' The Lord Jesus, who hath appointed the office of the ministry, hath also provided sufficient furniture for the persons called according to his mind to the discharge of that office, and the whole duty of it. That the administration of the ordinances of the gospel is the work of the ministry I suppose will not be denied. Now that this work of the ministry may be discharged to the edification of his body, and that to the end of the world, until all his people in every generation are brought unto the measure of grace assigned unto them in this life, is expressly affirmed. He hath given gifts for this end and purpose; namely, that the work of the ministry may be performed to the edification of his body. To say that the provision he hath made *is not* every way sufficient for the attaining of the end for

which it was made by him, or that he continueth not to make the same provision that he did formerly, are equally blasphemous; the one injurious to his wisdom, the other to his truth, both to his love and care of his church. For decency and uniformity in all his churches the Lord Jesus also hath provided. The administration of the same specifical ordinances in the assemblies of his disciples convened according to his mind, according to the same rule of his word, by virtue of the same specifical gifts of the Spirit by him bestowed on the administration of them, constitutes the uniformity that he requires and is acceptable unto him. This was the uniformity of the apostolical churches, walking by the same rule of faith and obedience, and no other. And this is all the uniformity that is among the true churches of Christ, that are this day in the world. To imagine that there should be a uniformity in words and phrases of speech and the like, is an impracticable figment, which never was obtained, nor ever will be to the end of the world. And when men by the invention of rites and orders, began to depart from this uniformity, how far they were from falling into any other, is notorious from that discourse of Socrates on this matter, lib. 5. cap. 21. For these then the Lord Christ hath made provision. And where there is this uniformity unto edification, let those things be attended unto which are requisite for the nature of assemblies meeting for such ends, as assemblies, and all the decency and order which Christ requireth will ensue. I suppose it will not be safe for any man, to derogate from the sufficiency of this provision. If any shall say, That we see and find by experience, that men called to be ministers are not so enabled to the work of the ministry, as by virtue of the gifts they have received to administer the ordinances of the gospel unto the edification of the church, I shall desire them to consider whether indeed such persons be rightly called unto the ministry, and do labour aright to discharge their duty in that office; seeing that if they are so, and do so, there seems to be a direct failure of the promise of Christ, which is blasphemy to imagine. And it may be considered, whether this pretended defect and want do not, where it is in those who are indeed called to the work of the ministry, proceed from their neglect to stir up the gifts

that they have received by the use and exercise of them, for which end alone they are intrusted with them. And it may be farther considered, whether their neglect hath not been occasioned greatly by some men's imposing of prescribed liturgies, and others trusting to their use in those things, and for those ends, for which men are intrusted with those gifts by Jesus Christ. And if this be so, as indeed upon due search it will appear so to be, then we have a secret inclusion of the provision made by Christ for the ends mentioned, plainly intimated unto us, before we arrive at the express consideration of it.

But to proceed. The provision that Christ hath made for the discharge of the whole work of the ministry, in the administration of the ordinances of the gospel unto the edification of his church, is his collation or bestowing of gifts on men rightly called to the office of the ministry, enabling them unto, and to be exercised in that work. In the prescription and imposition of a liturgy, there is a provision made for the discharge of the work of the ministry in the administration of the ordinances of the gospel unto the edification of the church, in and by the precise reading and pronouncing of the words set down therein without alteration, diminution, or addition. It remaineth then to consider whether this latter provision be not exclusive of the former, and whether the use of them both at the same time be not inconsistent. The administration of gospel ordinances, consists in prayer, thanksgiving, instruction, and exhortations, suitably applied unto the special nature and end of the several ordinances themselves, and the use of them in the church. For the right performance of all these, Christ gives gifts unto ministers; the Liturgy, a certain number of words to be read without addition or alteration, and this 'toties quoties' as the ordinances are to be administered. Now unless it can be made to appear, that an ability to read the prescribed words of the Liturgy, be the gifts promised by Christ for the discharge of the work of the ministers, which cannot be done, it is most evident, that there is an inconsistency between the use and actual exercise of these several provisions of mediums for the compassing of the same end; and consequently, the necessary indispensable use of the Liturgy is directly exclusive of the use of the

means provided by Christ, and for that end for which the Liturgy is invented and imposed. What dismal effects have issued hereupon may be declared hereafter if need be. Certainly more than one commandment of God, and more than one promise of Christ have been made void by this tradition. And I desire that none would be offended, if as my own apprehension I affirm, that the introduction of liturgies was, on the account insisted on, the principal means of increasing and carrying on that sad defection and apostacy, in the guilt whereof most churches in the world had inwrapped themselves. Nor doth there lie at present any relief against this consideration from hence, that ministers are allowed the exercise of their gifts they have received in their preaching, and prayers before and after sermons. For first, That indeed there is such a liberty allowed, if the present Liturgy be so imposed as by some is pretended, is very questionable; many that are looked on as skilled in that law and mystery of it, do by their practice give another interpretation of the intendment of its imposition, making it extend to all that is done in the public worship, the bare preaching or reading of a sermon or homily excepted. Nor, secondly, Is that the matter inquired into, whether ministers may at any time, or in any part of God's worship make use of their gifts, but whether they may do it in all those administrations, for whose performance to the edification of his body, they are bestowed on them by Jesus Christ; which by the rule of the Liturgy we have shewed they may not: and I doubt not but it will be granted by those who contend for the imposition of the Liturgy, that it extends to the principal parts, if not the whole of the public worship of God in the church. Now certainly it is necessary that conscience be clearly satisfied, that this prescription of a human provision of means for such ends in the worship of God, as Christ hath made provision for, which is excluded thereby, be not against express rule of Scripture, Ezek. xliii. 8. Matt. xv. 9. Col. ii. 20. without president or example, derogatory to the glory of Christ, Heb. iii. 5, 6. and in particular of his truth, wisdom, and love of his church, as also to the perfection of the Scripture, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. and whether it brings not the mi-

nisters of the gospel into open sin, Rom. xii. 6—8. 1 Cor. xii. 6—10. Eph. iv. 8. 11, 12. 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. and so be an occasion of the wrath of God, and ruin of the souls of men, before they admit of it, or submit unto it.

CHAP. X.

Other considerations about the imposition of liturgies.

FURTHERMORE, the great rule of gospel administrations is, that all things be done to edification. This is the main end of the ministry itself, in all the duties thereof, that are purely evangelical. For this end was the office of the ministry instituted, for this end are ministerial gifts dispensed, for this end were the sacraments appointed, and all church assemblies, church power, and whatever else belongs to churches; it is all ordained for this end that the body of Christ may be edified and increased with the increase of God, Eph. iv. 7—15. Col. ii. 19. Acts ix. 31. Rom. xiv. 15. 19. 1 Cor. x. 23. xiv. 3—5. 12. 26. 2 Cor. xii. 19. 1 Tit. i. 4. The full and adequate rule of all church order and duties is, that all things be done to edification. It doth not hence ensue that whatever men shall judge to conduce to edification, may be used by themselves or imposed on others in the worship of God. Christ himself, the only wise and competent judge in such cases, hath precisely himself determined what is conducing hereunto; having as on other accounts, so on this also, limited men to his prescription, because nothing is effectual unto edification but by virtue of his blessing, which is annexed only to his own institutions. But this will undeniably hence ensue, that whatever is contrary unto, or a hinderance of, edification, ought not to be appointed or observed in the worship of God. For certainly whatever is a hinderance of that in any kind, unto whose furtherance all things of that kind ought to contribute, their whole worth and virtue consisting in that contribution, can have no due place amongst them. If it appear that this is the state and condition of this imposed Liturgy in church administrations, I presume it will be con-

fessed, that it ought not to obtain any place or room amongst them. The edification of the church depends principally on the blessing of God upon the exercise of those ministerial gifts which are bestowed on men for that end; namely, that the church be edified. God supplying seed to the sower, blesseth it with an increase in the field where it is sowed, 2 Cor. ix. 10. The gifts that are bestowed on ministers are their principal talents that they ought to trade withal for the profit of their Master; that is, the building up of his house wherein his wealth in this world doth lie. Yea, all the gifts that are bestowed by the Spirit of Christ on men, are given them to profit withal, 1 Cor. xii. 7. and they are required with them to act for God in the edification of the body of Christ, every one according to his measure; 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. This I suppose will be granted. Moreover, that the gifts bestowed by Christ on the guides of his church, the ministers of the gospel, are proportioned and suited to the end which he aimeth to accomplish by them, as we have in part before declared, so it is evident from the infinite wisdom of him that bestows them. From both which it will undeniably follow, that on the due and regular use and employment of those gifts which men receive from Christ, depends and that solely the edification of his church. I suppose this will not be denied, where the gifts bestowed by the Spirit of Christ upon the ministers of his church, are used and exercised in the work of the ministry, according to his mind and will, there by his blessing the edification which he doth intend will ensue. Let us then proceed. These gifts as the Scripture witnesseth, and experience convinceth, are bestowed in great variety and in several degrees. The greater and more excellent they are in any intrusted with them, the more excellent is the means of edification which the Lord affords unto his disciples by them. Edification, then, as in its general nature it depends on the gifts of Christ which he bestows on the officers of his church, so as to the degrees of it, and its special furtherance, it depends on the degrees and special improvement of those gifts. For this cause all those to whom the work of the ministry is committed, as they ought to 'desire spiritual gifts,' 1 Cor. xiv. 1. that the church may be edified by them, *so to 'covet* earnestly the best gifts,' chap. xii. 31.

that they may singularly edify the church, and also seek to excel in those gifts, chap. xiv. 20. that the same word of edification may be carried on to the utmost. It may then be inquired how these spiritual gifts, which we must suppose all ministers of the gospel in some measure to have received, may be improved, so that they may excel to the edifying of the church, which is expressly required of them. We say then, that the improvement and increase of spiritual gifts doth ordinarily and regularly depend on their due and holy exercise. He that had a talent and used it not, though he endeavoured to keep it safe, yet it did not increase; when every one that traded with the stock wherewith they were intrusted, made a regular increase according to the measure they had received. And in experience we daily see men napkining their talents until they are taken from them; whilst others receive additions to their store, at least such supplies as that their first provisions fail not. Hence the great direction for the exercise of the work of the ministry is, to stir up the gift received, by a due performance whereof in all persons intrusted with them, is the whole work of edifying the body of Christ, until it reach the measure appointed to every member, completed and finished. Edification, then, depends on the improvement of gifts, and the improvement of gifts on their due exercise according to the mind of Christ. The want, then, of that due exercise, either by the neglect of them on whom they are bestowed, or any hinderance of it put upon them by others, is the sole way of obstructing the improvement of spiritual gifts, and by direct and immediate consequence of the edification of the church. Now this seems to be so much done by the prescription of the Liturgy and imposition of it, that it is impossible for the wit of man to invent a more effectual expedient for the compassing of that evil end. The main exercise of spiritual gifts on which their growth and improvement doth depend, lies in the administration of gospel ordinances. That is the work of the ministry for which they are bestowed. To hinder therefore or forbid that exercise is directly to forbid the due, regular, appointed means of their increase, and so also of the edification of the body of Christ; the means indispensably necessary unto it, being removed and taken away. Now this is openly and avowedly done in the im-

posed Liturgy if imposed. It says expressly that the ministers of the gospel shall not use or exercise any spiritual gift in the administration of those ordinances for which provision is made in the book.

And as in this case the condition of the people who are deprived of the means of their edification, is sad, so that of the ministers of the gospel miserable and deplorable. The Lord Jesus Christ bestows gifts upon them, requiring the use and exercise of them in the work of the ministry at their utmost peril; men on the other side forbid them that use and exercise, and that with such forcible prohibitions as threaten to bear down the whole public exercise of the ministry before them. But the Lord knows how to deliver those that are his out of temptation. It will be no relief against the force of this consideration, that there are some things left wherein ministers may exercise their gifts and trade with their talents; for as this is but pretended, so it is not in this or that part of their work, but in the whole of the ministry committed unto them, that Christ indispensably requires the guides of his church, that they should trade with their talents and exercise their gifts; and accordingly are they to provide for their account at the last day. By this one engine, then, at the same time are the people deprived of the means of edification provided for them in the care, wisdom, and love of the Lord Christ, and ministers brought into a necessity of sinning, or foregoing the public exercise of their ministry.

Again in particular; It is the work and duty of the ministers of the gospel, to make application of the grace of Christ whereof they are stewards to the flocks committed to their charge, and that according to the especial state and condition of all especial wants which may any way be known unto them. The way of their application of this grace, lies principally in the administration of gospel ordinances. Therein are they to declare, unfold, tender, and apply the grace of Christ according unto the wants of his disciples, the good of whose souls they watch for in particular. These wants are very far from being the same, in the same degree in and unto every congregation, or unto any one congregation at all times, or unto all persons in any congregation, which *is easily discerned* by a faithful and skilful guide.

The especial application then mentioned according to the rule of the gospel, and special addresses unto God in the name of the flock, with respect to the especial wants of all or any of them, belongs to that edification which Christ hath appointed for his church. Now how this duty can be attended unto in the observance of a prescribed form of liturgy, from whence it is not lawful to digress, is beyond my understanding to apprehend. I confess men who scoff at edification, and deride spiritual gifts, who think all religion to consist in the observation of some carnal institution, who neither know nor care to come to an acquaintance with the spiritual wants of poor souls, nor do tremble at the threatenings of Christ pointed against their negligence and ignorance, Ezek. xxxiv. 4. that suppose the whole baptized world converted to God, and preaching itself on that account less necessary than formerly at the first plantation of the gospel; that esteem the doubts and temptations of believers as needless scruples, and their sedulous endeavours to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ labour lost in hypocrisy; that perhaps do envy at, and are troubled with the light and knowledge of the people of God, and suppose they can discharge the duty of the ministry by a bare reading of the service-book to their parish, by themselves, or some hired by them so to do, without once inquiring into the spiritual condition of them, the care of whose souls they plead to be committed to them, may think light of this consideration; but those who know the terror of the Lord, and any thing of their own duty, will be otherwise minded. Yea, farther; there seems to be in the imposition of a liturgy to be used always as a form in all gospel administrations, an unwarrantable abridgment of their liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free; and therefore sin in the imposition and use of it. For as it is a sin in others to abridge us of the liberty purchased for us by Jesus Christ, so it is in us, to give it up, and not to suffer in our testimony for it. Now of that liberty purchased for us by Jesus Christ, so far as it relates to the worship of God, there are two parts. First, A freedom from those pedagogical institutions of God himself, which by his own appointment were to continue only to the time of reformation. Secondly, A freedom from subjection to the authority of men as to any new impositions in or

about the worship of God; 1 Cor. vii. 11. And the same rule is given out as to our duty and deportment in reference unto both these, Gal. v. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 16. Now not to stand fast in the liberty for us purchased by Christ, is not to have that esteem of it as a privilege given us by his love as we ought to have, nor that sense of it as a duty enjoined us by him which ought to be in us. I say, there is the same reason of both these in respect of liberty. As we are freed from Mosaical institutions, so that none can impose the observation of them upon us by virtue of their first appointment, so are we also from any succeeding impositions of men. Our liberty equally respects the one and the other. And as to those institutions, such was the tenderness of the Holy Ghost and the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ by his directions and guidance, that they would not (no not for a season) enjoin the observance of any of them, no not of those which put men on no positive duties, but were mere abridgments in point of some practices, upon the disciples of Christ, but only such whose observation for that season was made necessary by reason of scandals and offences, before any such imposition of theirs, Acts xv. nor by a parity of reason if regard be had to their example, can there any abridgment be lawfully made of the liberty of Christ's disciples by any imposition of things of the latter sort, unless it be as to the observation of some such things as are made necessary in case of scandal antecedent unto any such imposition. We grant then that there may be, yea, there ought 'de facto' to be an abridgment made of our liberty, as to the performance of some things at some times, which in general we are made free unto, where that performance in the use and exercise of our liberty would prove a hinderance unto edification, the great end whereunto all these things are subservient. But then the case must be so stated antecedent to any imposition. First to impose that which is not necessary, and then to assert a necessity of its observation lest scandal should ensue, is a course that men are not directed unto by any gospel rule or apostolical practice. The sum is, that abridgment of the liberty of the disciples of Christ by impositions on them of things which he hath not appointed, nor made necessary by circumstances antecedent unto such impositions, are plain usurpations upon the consciences of the disciples of Christ, destructive

of the liberty which he hath purchased for them, and which if it be their duty to walk according to gospel rule, is sinful to submit unto. That of this nature is the imposition of a liturgy contended about, is evident. It hath no institution or appointment by Jesus Christ, it is wholly of men, there is nothing antecedent unto its imposition that should make it necessary to be imposed; a necessity of its observation is induced upon and by its imposition, which is directly destructive to our liberty in Jesus Christ. The necessity pretended from the insufficiency of ministers for the discharge of that which is their proper work, hath in great part been caused by this imposition; and where it hath not, some men's sin is not to be made other men's punishment. Reasons pleaded for the imposition opposed, shall be elsewhere considered.

A

BRIEF INSTRUCTION

IN THE

WORSHIP OF GOD,

AND

DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCHES

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

BY WAY OF

QUESTION AND ANSWER;

WITH

AN EXPLICATION AND CONFIRMATION OF THOSE ANSWERS.

SHORT CATECHISM:

WITH AN

EXPLICATION UPON THE SAME.

Quest. 1. WHAT doth God require of us in our dependence on him, that he may be glorified by us, and we accepted with him?

Ans. That we(a) worship him(b) in and by the ways of his own appointment. (a) Matt. iv. 10. Rev. xiv. 7. Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. (b) Lev. x. 1—3. Exod. xxiv. 3. Gen. xviii. 19. Josh. xxiii. 6. 8. Zech. xiv. 16.

EXPLICATION.

By the worship of God inquired after, not that which is natural or moral, which is required in the first commandment, is intended. Such is our faith and confidence in him, our fear of him, our subjection of soul and conscience unto him, as the great Sovereign Lord, First Cause, Last End, Judge, and Rewarder of all men; the law whereof was originally written in the heart of man, and hath been variously improved and directed by new revelations and institutions. And this worship is called natural, upon a double account.

First, Because it depends on the nature of God, a due perception and understanding whereof makes all this worship indispensably necessary: for none can know God, but it is his duty 'to glorify him as God;' that is, to believe in him, love him, trust him, and call upon him, which all are therefore cursed that do not; Psal. lxxix. 6. 2 Thess. i. 8.

And secondly, Because it was in the principle of it concreated with the nature of man, as that which suited,

directed, and enabled him to answer the law of his creation, requiring this obedience of him in his dependence on God. And this worship is invariable: but it concerneth those outward ways and means whereby God hath appointed that faith, and love, and fear of him to be exercised and expressed unto his glory. And this kind of worship, though it depend not upon the nature of God, but upon his free and arbitrary disposal, and so was of old liable unto alterations; yet God did ever strictly require in the several states and conditions that his church hath gone through in the world. And this is that, which most commonly in the Scripture is called by the name of 'the worship of God;' as that whereby all the acceptable actings of the souls of men towards him are expressed, and the only way of owning and acknowledging him in the world, as also of entertaining a visible intercourse with him. This therefore he calls for, and requires indispensably of all that draw nigh to him, and that because he is 'the Lord our God;' Rev. xiv. 6, 7. Matt. iv. 10. Deut. x. 12, 13. For his observance hereof, doth he so approve of Abraham; Gen. xviii. 19. And sets it down as an everlasting law unto all others, that in a holy observation thereof, 'he will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him;' Lev. x. 1—3. his commands also concerning it are multiplied in the Scripture, with the approbation of all those that attend unto them. We may not think to find acceptance with God, or to inherit the promises, if supposing ourselves to adhere unto him in worship internal and natural, we neglect that which is external, and of his free appointment: for besides, that we renounce thereby our inward dependence on him also, in not observing his commands, as Adam did in transgressing an institution, we become wholly useless unto all the ends of his glory in the world, which is not the way to come to an enjoyment of him. Neither do we only express and profess our inward, moral, natural worship of God hereby, by which means it becomes the principal way and instrument of faith and trust exerting themselves in our obedience, but also it is a most effectual help and assistance unto the principle of that natural worship, strengthening the habit of it, and exciting it unto all suitable actings, unto its increase and growth.

Quest. 2. By what means do we come to know that God will thus be worshipped?

Ans. That God is to be worshipped, and that according to his own will and appointment, is a (a) principal branch of the law of our creation, written in our hearts, the (b) sense whereof is renewed in the second commandment; but the ways and means of that worship depend merely on God's (c) sovereign pleasure and institution. (a) Rom. i. 21. ii. 14, 15. Acts xv. 16, 17. xvii. 23—29. (b) Exod. xx. 4—6. (c) Jer. vii. 31. Exod. xxv. 40. Heb. iii. 1—6. John i. 18.

EXPLICATION.

These two things all men see by nature.

First, That God, however they mistook in their apprehensions of him, would be and was to be worshipped with some outward solemn worship. So that although some are reported to have even cast off all knowledge and sense of a Divine Being, yet never any were heard of, that came to an acknowledgment of any God, true or false, but they all consented that he was constantly and solemnly to be worshipped; and that not only by individual persons, but by societies together, that so they might own and honour him whom they took for their God. And thus far outward worship is required in the first commandment; namely, that the inward be exercised and expressed. When we take God for our God, we take him to worship him; Deut. x. 12, 13. other thoughts, namely, of inward worship without outward expression at all or any time, or in any way, are but a covert unto atheism. And,

Secondly, This also they are led to an apprehension of, by the same light whereby they are 'a law unto themselves;' Rom. ii. 14. that God would be worshipped in the way, and by the means that he himself appointed and approved; whence none among the heathen themselves undertook to appoint ways and ceremonies of worship, but still they pretended to derive the knowledge of them from the gods themselves, of whom they reckoned that every one would be worshipped in his own way. And because, notwithstanding this pretence, being left of God, and deluded of Satan, they did invent false and foolish ways of worship, not only not appointed of God, but such as were unsuited unto those inbred notions which

they had of his nature and excellencies, the apostle convinces and disproves them, as men acting against the light of nature, and principles of reason; Rom. i. 21. they might have seen that, in their idolatry, they answered not their own inbred conceptions of the divine power and Godhead, so as to glorify him as God. And in the like manner doth he argue at large, Acts xvii. 23. but beyond this, the inbred light of nature could not conduct any of the sons of men. This alone is contained in the first precept; that God was to be worshipped they knew, and that he was to be worshipped by ways and means of his own appointment they knew; but what those ways and means were, they knew not. These always depended on God's sovereign will and pleasure, and he made them known to whom he pleased; Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. And although some of the ways which he doth appoint, may seem to have a great compliance in them unto the light of nature, yet in his worship he accepts them not on that account, but merely on that of his own institution; and this as he hath declared his will about in the second commandment, so he hath severely forbidden the addition of our own inventions unto what he hath appointed: sending us for instruction unto him alone, whom he hath endowed with sovereign authority to reveal his will, and ordain his worship; John i. 18. Matt. xvii. 5. 1 Chron. xvi. 13.

Quest. 3. How then are these ways and means of the worship of God made known unto us?

Ans. In and by the written word only; which contains a full and perfect revelation of the will of God, as to his whole worship, and all the concernments of it. John v. 39. Isa. viii. 20. Luke xvi. 19. 2 Tim. iii. 15.—17. 1 Pet. i. 19. Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. Josh. i. 7. Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 20. Isa. xxix. 13.

EXPLICATION.

The end wherefore God granted his word unto the church was, that thereby it might be instructed in his mind and will as to what concerns the worship and obedience that he requireth of us, and which is accepted with him. This the whole Scripture itself everywhere declares and speaks out unto all that do receive it; as 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. with the residue of the testimonies above recited do declare.

It supposeth, it declareth, that of ourselves we are ignorant how God is, how he ought to be worshipped; Isa. viii. 20. Moreover, it manifests him to be a jealous God, exercising that holy property of his nature in an especial manner about his worship; rejecting and despising every thing that is not according to his will, that is not of his institution; Exod. xx. 4, 5.

That we may know what is so, he hath made a revelation of his mind and will in his written word, that is, the Scripture; and to the end that we might expect instruction from thence alone in his worship, and act therein accordingly.

First, He sends us and directs us thereunto, expressly for that purpose, Isa. viii. 28. Luke xvi. 19. John v. 39. and not once intimates in the least any other way or means of instruction unto the end.

Secondly, He frequently affirms that it is sufficient, able, and perfect to guide us therein; 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. 1 Pet. i. 19. Psal. xix. 7—9. and whereas he hath expressly given it unto us for that end, if there be any want or defect therein, it must arise from hence, that either God would not, or could not, give unto us a perfect revelation of his will; neither of which can be imagined.

Thirdly, He hath commanded us to observe all whatsoever he hath appointed therein, and not to make any addition thereunto; Josh. i. 7. Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 20. And,

Fourthly, Peculiarly interdicted us the use of any such things as are of the institution or appointment of men, Isa. xxix. 13, 14. So that from the Scriptures alone are we to learn what is accepted with God in his worship.

Quest. 4. Have these ways and means been always the same from the beginning?

Ans. No. But God hath altered and changed them at sundry seasons according to the counsel of his own will, so as he saw necessary for his own glory, and the edification of his church. See Gen. ii. 16, 17. xvii. 10, 11. Exod. xii. 3—5. xx. xxv. 9. Heb. i. 1. ix. 10—12.

EXPLICATION.

The external worship whereof we speak being, as was shewed before, not natural or moral, arising necessarily from

the dependence of the rational creature on God, as its first cause, chiefest good, last end, and sovereign Lord, but proceeding from the mere will and pleasure of God, determining how he will be honoured and glorified in the world, was always alterable by him by whom it was appointed. And whereas ever since the entrance of sin into the world, God had always respect unto the promise of the Lord Christ, and his mediation, in whom alone he will be glorified, and faith in whom he aimed to begin and increase in all his worship, he hath suited his institutions of the means thereof to that dispensation of light and knowledge of him, which he was pleased at any time to grant. Thus immediately after the giving of the promise, he appointed sacrifices for the great means of his worship; as to glorify himself expressly by men's offering unto him of the principal good things which he had given them, so to instruct them in the faith, and confirm them in the expectation of the great sacrifice for sin that was to be offered by the promised seed; Gen. iv. 3, 4. Heb. xi. 4. These were the first instituted worship of God in the world after the entrance of sin. Hereunto he nextly added circumcision, as an express sign of the covenant, with the grace of it, which he called Abraham and his seed unto by Jesus Christ; Gen. xvii. 10, 11. And to the same general end and purpose he afterward superadded the passover, with its attendant institutions, Exod. xii. 23, 24. and then the whole law of institutions contained in ordinances, by the ministry of angels on Mount Sinai; Exod. xx. So by sundry degrees he built up that fabric of his outward worship, which was suited in his infinite wisdom unto his own glory, and the edification of his church, until the exhibition of the promised seed, or the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the accomplishment of the work of his mediation, Heb. i. 1. for unto that season were those ordinances to serve, and no longer; Heb. ix. 10—12. And then were they removed by the same authority whereby they were instituted and appointed; Col. ii. 14, 18—20. So that though God would never allow that men, upon what pretence soever, should make any alteration in the worship appointed by him, by adding unto it any thing of their own, or omitting aught that he had commanded, either in matter or manner, notwithstanding that he knew that it was to abide but for a sea-

son, but commanded all men straightly to attend to the observation of it whilst it was by him continued in force; Mal. iv. 4. yet he always reserved unto himself the sovereign power of altering, changing, or utterly abolishing it at his own pleasure: which authority he exerted in the gospel as to all the mere institutions of the Old Testament. Whilst they continued he enforced them with moral reasons, as his own holiness and authority; but those reasons prove not any of those institutions to be moral, unless they ensue upon those reasons alone, and are no where else commanded; for being once instituted and commanded, they are to be enforced with moral considerations taken from the nature of God, and our duty in reference unto his authority. So, saith he, 'Thou shalt reverence my sanctuary, I am the Lord;' which no more proves that a moral duty than that enjoined upon the same foundation, Lev. xi. 44. 'I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy, neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.' Not defiling ourselves with the touching or eating of creeping things, is now no moral duty, since the institution is ceased, although it be enforced by many moral considerations.

Quest. 5. Is there any farther alteration to be expected in or of those institutions and ordinances of worship, which are revealed and appointed in the gospel?

Ans. No. The last complete revelation of the will of God being made by the Son, who is Lord of all, his commands and institutions are to be observed inviolably unto the end of the world, without alteration, diminution, or addition; Heb. i. 1. x. 25—27. Matt. xxviii. 20. 1 Cor. xi. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 14.

EXPLICATION.

It was shewed before, that all the institutions of the Old Testament had respect unto the coming of Christ in the flesh, who was the 'end of the law;' Rom. x. 4. and thereupon they were subject to alteration or abolition upon a two-fold account.

1. Because that which they were appointed principally to instruct the church in, and to direct it unto the expec-

tation of, was upon his coming accomplished and fulfilled; so that their end was absolutely taken away, and they could no more truly teach the mind and will of God; for they would still direct unto that which was to come, after it was passed and accomplished. And this is that which the apostle Paul so variously proves and fully confirms in his Epistle to the Hebrews, especially in the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters.

2. The Lord Christ, during their continuance, was to come as the Lord over his whole house, with more full and ample authority than any of those whom God had employed in the institution of his ordinances of old were intrusted withal. Heb. i. 1—3. 'He spake in former days by the prophets, but now by the Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all.' Chap. iii. 5, 6. 'Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we.' And therefore they are all to be at his disposal, to confirm or remove, as he saw reason and occasion. And this he did (1.) virtually in the sacrifice of himself, or the blood of his cross, fulfilling and finishing of them all; John xix. 30. 'Breaking down the middle wall of partition, abolishing in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;' Eph. ii. 15. Col. ii. 14. (2.) Authoritatively, by his Spirit in the apostles, and the doctrine of the gospel preached by them. Acts xv. 10, 11. 'Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear: but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.' Gal. iii. 24, 25. 'Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.' Chap. v. 2—4. And (3.) eventually or providentially, when he caused 'sacrifice and offering to cease, by the prince of the people, that came with an army making desolate, to destroy both city and sanctuary,' Dan. ix. 26, 27. according to his prediction, Matt. xxiv. 2. But now under the New Testament, the worship that is appointed in the gospel, is founded in, and built upon, what is already past and ac-

complished; namely, the death and life of Jesus Christ, with the sacrifice and atonement for sin made thereby, 1 Cor. xi. 23—26. which can never be again performed; neither is there any thing else to the same purpose either needful or possible; Heb. x. 26. So that there is not any ground left for any new institution of worship, or any alteration in those that are already instituted. Nor,

Secondly; Can any one be expected to come from God with a greater and more full authority for the revelation of his mind, than that wherewith his only Son was accompanied; which yet must be, if any alterations were to be made in the appointments of worship that he hath instituted in the gospel.

For no inferior, nor an equal authority, can abolish or alter that which is already appointed, so as to give satisfaction unto the consciences of men in obedience unto such alterations. And therefore because there arose not a prophet like unto Moses under the Old Testament, there could be no alteration made in his institutions, but the church was bound severely to observe them all until the coming of Christ. Matt. iv. 4. 'Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with his statutes and judgments;' and that because there arose not a prophet afterwards in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,' Deut. xxxiv. 10. And our apostle, to prove the right of Christ to alter the ordinances of the law, lays his foundation in manifesting that he was above the angels: Heb. i. 4. 'Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;' and that because the law was given by the ministry of angels, chap. ii. 2. and so also that he was greater than Moses, chap. iii. 3. 'For this man was accounted worthy of more glory than Moses, in as much as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house; Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house:' because Moses was the lawgiver, and the mediator between God and man in the giving of the law. Now if this be the sole foundation and warrant of the alteration made of Mosaical ordinances by Christ, namely, that he was greater and exalted above all those whose ministry was used in the dispensation

of the law, unless some can be thought to be greater, and exalted in authority above the Son of God, there can be no alteration expected in the institutions of the gospel.

Quest. 6. May not such an estate of faith and perfection in obedience be attained in this life, as wherein believers may be freed from all obligation unto the observation of gospel institutions?

Ans. No. For the ordinances and institutions of the gospel being inseparably annexed unto the evangelical administration of the covenant of grace, they may not be left unobserved, disused, or omitted, whilst we are to walk before God in that covenant, without contempt of the covenant itself, as also of the wisdom and authority of Jesus Christ. Heb. iii. 3—6. Rom. vi. 3—6. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 24—26. Heb. x. 25. Rev. ii. 5. iii. 3.

EXPLICATION.

All our faith, all our obedience in this life, whatever may be obtained, or attained unto therein, it all belongs unto our walking with God in the covenant of grace, wherein God dwells with men, and they are his people, and God himself is with them to be their God. Other ways of communion with him, of obedience unto him, of enjoyment of him on this side heaven and glory, he hath not appointed nor revealed. Now this is the covenant that God hath made with his people; 'That he will put his laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and will be to them a God, and they shall be to him a people; and he will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will he remember no more;' Heb. viii. 9—12. And whatever men attain unto, it is by virtue of the grace of that covenant, nor is there any grace promised in the covenant to lead men in this life, or to give them up unto a state of perfection short of glory. Unto this covenant, are the institutions of gospel worship annexed, and unto that administration of it which is granted unto the church upon the coming and death of Christ. Without a renunciation and relinquishment of that covenant, and the grace of it, these institutions cannot be omitted or deserted. If men suppose that they have attained to an estate wherein they need neither the grace of God, nor the mercy of God, nor the blood of Christ,

nor the Spirit of Christ, it is not much material what they think of the ordinances of worship. Their pride and folly, without that mercy which is taught, promised, and exhibited in those ordinances, will speedily be their ruin. Besides, the Lord Christ is the absolute 'Lord over his own house;' Heb. iii. 4—6. And he hath given out the laws whereby he will have it guided and ruled whilst it is in this world. In and by these laws are his ordinances of worship established: for any persons, on what pretence soever, to plead an exemption from the obligation of those laws, it is nothing but to cast off the lordship and dominion of Christ himself. And yet farther, to secure our obedience in this matter, he hath expressly commanded the continuance of them until his coming unto judgment, as in the places above quoted will appear.

Quest. 7. What are the chief things that we ought to aim at in our observation of the institutions of Christ in the gospel?

Ans. (1.) To sanctify the name of God. (2.) To own and avow our professed subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. (3.) To build up ourselves in our most holy faith. And, (4.) To testify and confirm our mutual love, as we are believers. (1) Levit. x. 3. Heb. xii. 28, 29. (2) Deut. xxvi. 17. Josh. xxiv. 22. 2 Cor. viii. 5. (3) Ephes. iv. 12—16. Jude 20. (4) 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

EXPLICATION.

That we may profitably and comfortably, unto the glory of God and our own edification, be exercised in the observation of the institutions and worship of God, we are always to consider what are the ends for which God hath appointed them, and commanded our attendance unto them, that so our observance of them may be the obedience of faith. For what ends soever God hath appointed them unto, for that end are they useful and effectual, and to no other. If we come to them for any other end, if we use them for any other purpose, or with any other design, if we look for any thing in them or by them, but what God hath appointed them to communicate unto us, we dishonour God, and deceive our own souls. This we ought diligently to inquire into, to know not only what God requires of us, but where-

fore also he requires it, and what he aims at therein. Some of the principal things whereof are enumerated in this answer. And it is well known how horribly many of the institutions of the gospel have been by some, especially the Papists, abused by a neglect of the ends of God in them, and imposing new ends of their own upon them, unto superstition and idolatry. Grace is ascribed unto the outward observance of them, whereas all grace is of the promise, and the promise in the covenant is given only to the faith of the right observers. The elements in the sacrament of the Eucharist are turned into a God, first worshipped, and then devoured, with many the like abominations.

Quest. 8. How may we sanctify the name of God in the use of gospel institutions?

Ans. (1.) By a holy reverence of his sovereign authority appointing of them. (2.) A holy regard unto his special presence in them. (3.) Faith in his promises annexed to them. (4.) Delight in his will, wisdom, love, and grace, manifested in them. (5.) Constancy and perseverance in obedience unto him in their due observation. (1) Levit. x. 3. Mal. i. 6. Rom. iv. 11. Exod. xx. 6, 7. James iv. 12. (2) Matt. xxviii. 20. Isa. lix. 21. Exod. xxix. 43—45. (3) Gen. xv. 6. Heb. iv. 2. 6. Exod. xii. 27, 28. 2 Cor. vi. 16—18. vii. 1. (4) Psal. lxxxviii. 1, 2. 4. 10. lxv. 4. xxxvi. 7, 8. (5) Psal. xxiii. 6. xxvii. 4. Rev. ii. 3. 10. Gal. vi. 9. Heb. x. 23—25. xii. 3.

EXPLICATION.

This is the first thing that God requireth us to attend unto, in the celebration of the ordinances of his worship; namely, that we therein sanctify his name, the greatest duty that we are called unto in this world. This he lays down as the general rule of all we do herein; Levit. x. 3. 'I will,' saith he, 'be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' Whatever we do in his worship, we must do it that he may be sanctified, or whatever we do is an abomination to him. Now the principal ways how we may herein sanctify the name of God are expressed. As,

First, When in every ordinance we consider his appointment of it, and submit our souls and consciences unto his authority therein; which if we observe any thing in his wor-

hip but what he hath appointed, we cannot do it. Not rmality, not custom, not the precepts of men, not any ing but the authority and command of God, is to be re-ected in this obedience. This is the first thing that faith gards in divine worship; it rests not in any thing, closeth t with any thing, but what it discerns that God hath com-anded; and therein it eyes his authority as he requireth . Mal. i. 6. 'If I be a father, where is mine honour? If I a master, where is my fear?' Rom. xiv. 11. 'As I live, ith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every ngue shall confess to God.' Reverence then unto the thority of God appointing his worship, is a principal eans of sanctifying the name of God therein. This was he solemn sanction of all his institutions of old. Deut. vi. —7. 'Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord. And hou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and ith all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words hich I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.' And the observation of them he presseth on this account, hat the people might fear that 'glorious and dreadful ame, the Lord thy God;' Deut. xxviii. 58. which name he had so often engaged in his commands, saying, Thou shalt do it, 'I am the Lord.' And in the New Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ proposeth his authority as the foundation of his commanding, and our observation of all the institutions of the gospel; Matt. xxviii. 18—20. 'Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the ame of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; eaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have com-anded you.' And he is to be considered in all our obe-ience, as the great and only Lawgiver of his church, as 'the ne Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy;' James r. 12. the sovereign 'Lord over his house,' Heb. iii. 4—6. nto whom every knee is to bow, and every conscience to e in subjection; and he who 'heareth not his voice,' is to be ut off from the people of God; Acts iii. 23. 'It shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, hall be destroyed from among the people.'

Secondly, God hath frequently promised his special pre-

sence in and with his instituted ordinances. Of old, both unto the things themselves, and the places wherein they were according to his appointment to be celebrated; those of places being also of his special institution. Under the New Testament, all difference of, and respect unto place is taken away; John iv. 21. 'The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him.' And we are commanded in all places equally to make our prayers and supplications; but his presence is promised and continued with the due celebration of the things themselves by him appointed for his service; Matt. xxviii. 20. 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you even to the end of the world.' In them is the tabernacle of God with men, and he 'dwells among them, and they are his people;' Rev. xxi. 3. the promise of Christ being, that where 'two or three are assembled in his name, there he will be in the midst of them;' Matt. viii. 18. 20. And this promised presence of God, or Christ, consisteth, 1. In the power and efficacy which he by his Spirit implants upon his ordinances to communicate his grace and mercy unto his church; it being his covenant, that his Spirit shall accompany his word for ever unto that purpose; Isa. lix. 21. 2. In the special blessing which he gives his people in those duties, both in the acceptance of them and testifying his good will unto them. Exod. xxix. 42, 43. 45. 'At the tabernacle of the congregation will I meet with the people, saith the Lord, there will I meet with the children of Israel. And the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory, and I will dwell amongst the children of Israel, and will be their God;' Zech. ii. 10, 11. Ezek. xx. 40, 41. 'I will accept you with your sweet savour;' chap. xliii. 27. in both giving them intimate communion with himself by Jesus Christ; John i. 3. By all these he gives that special presence, which he requires an especial reverence and regard of faith unto, whereby his name is yet farther sanctified. 3. God hath given special promises, or promises of his special grace unto them that attend upon him in his worship in a due manner; and hereunto also belongs that

sacred relation, which by virtue of divine institution is between the sacramental elements, and the especial graces of the covenant which they exhibit and confirm; and the mixing of these promises with faith, according as they are appropriated unto any particular institution, belongs also to the right sanctification of the mind of God. So also, 4. doth our delight in them: now this delight in the worship of God, so much commended in the Scripture, and proposed unto our example, consists not in any carnal self-pleasing, or satisfaction in the outward modes or manner of the performance of divine worship, but it is a holy soul-refreshing contemplation on the will, wisdom, grace, and condescension of God; in that he is pleased of his own sovereign mere will and grace, so to manifest himself unto such poor sinful creatures as we are; so to condescend unto our weakness; so to communicate himself unto us; so to excite and draw forth our souls unto himself; and to give us such pledges of his gracious intercourse with us by Jesus Christ: by the contemplation of these things is the soul drawn forth to delight in God.

Lastly, Whereas great opposition lies oftentimes against the church's obedience unto God in this matter, and much persecution befalls it on that account; great weariness also being apt from the remainders of unbelief, carnal wisdom, indwelling sin, weakness of the flesh, in believers themselves to arise in the course thereof, and many temptations also beset them on every hand, to turn them aside from the way of truth and holiness; constancy and perseverance in the due and orderly celebration of all the ordinances of the gospel belongs unto this duty. And this perseverance respecteth both the things themselves, and the manner of their performance, both which are of the highest concernment for us diligently to attend unto.

1. As to the things themselves: herein do we principally glorify God, and give due honour unto Jesus Christ, when we abide in our professed subjection unto him, and observance of his commands, against difficulties, oppositions, and persecutions. This he taketh notice of, Rev. ii. 13. 'Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.' And this

he requireth of us indispensably, if we will be his disciples, or ever hope to obtain the reward. Matt. x. 38, 39. 'He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me;' and it is he who endureth unto the end, that shall be saved; Matt. xxiv. 13. And unto them who are faithful unto the death, and them alone, doth he give the crown of life; Rev. ii. 10. giving us caution not to lose those things which we have wrought, that we may receive a full reward, 2 John 8. 2. And as to the manner of their performance, two things are to be regarded in this duty of perseverance, and the sanctification of the name of God therein.

(1.) The inward principle of our obedience, our faith, and love, which are to be preserved from decay. Rev. ii. 4, 5. 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love; remember, therefore, from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.' Chap. iii. 3. 'Remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast and repent.'

(2.) The outward manner of observance which is to be kept entire, according to the primitive institution of Christ. 1 Cor. xi. 23. 'I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you,' not admitting of any corruptions in it to avoid the greatest trouble. Gal. v. 11. 'And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?'

Quest. 9. How do we in our observation, profess our subjection unto the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel?

Ans. In that being all of them, 1. Appointed by him as the Head, Lawgiver, King of his church. And, 2. Made by him the ensigns and tokens of his kingdom and subjects, in their due observation principally consists that profession of him and his name, which he so often calleth us unto, and so indispensably requireth at our hands, Matt. xxviii. 18—20. 1 Cor. xi. 23. Heb. iii. 6. xii. 25. John viii. 31. xiii. 13. xiv. 15. 21. 23. xv. 14. 17. xiii. 35. xv. 14. Luke ix. 26. Rom. x. 10. 1 John ii. 3, 4.

EXPLICATION.

The ground and reason of this duty is evident. The Lord Jesus Christ straitly enjoins all his disciples the profession of his name, and lays it on them as indispensable

› salvation. Rom. x. 10. ‘With the heart man believeth › righteousness, with the mouth confession’ or profession nade unto salvation.’ John xii. 42—45. Now this pro-ion of the name of Christ, which is so much abused and aken in the world, consists in the keeping of his com-dments: John xv. 14. ‘Ye are my friends, if ye do what-er I command you.’ So also Matt. xxviii. 20. his dis-es are to be taught to do and observe whatever he com-deth. Now whereas he is the head and king of the rch, the next immediate and special lawgiver of it, ap-nting unto it all his ordinances, and its whole worship, t becomes him who is Lord of the house, the institutions ne gospel worship are his most especial commands: and their observation consists that profession of him which equires of us; therein doth he call them out of the world rofession, whom he hath redeemed out of it by his blood; or. vi. 15—17. Rev. 5. 9. In these he exerciseth his ly or lordly power over his church, Heb. iii. 6. and in willing obedience of his people, gathering themselves › the ensigns of his rule, he is glorified in the world.

Quest. 10. How do we in and by them build up ourselves ur most holy faith?

Ans. By the exercise of that communion with God in ist Jesus, which in their due observation he graciously tes and admits us unto, for the increase of his grace in and the testification of his love and good will towards Gen. xvii. 10. Levit. xxvi. 11, 12. Prov. xii. 5, 6. Ezek. i. 27, 28. Zech. xiv. 16, 17. Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. Rom.

EXPLICATION.

The next and principal ends of all instituted worship in ect of believers, are the increase of the grace of God in ı, their edification in their most holy faith, and the tes-ion of the good will of God unto them. Eph. iv. 11—15. l he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, gelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the per-ng of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the ing of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity ıe faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto rfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness hrist: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to

and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.' Whence also is that prayer of the apostle for the blessing of God upon the church, in the use of them, Eph. iii. 16—18. 'That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.' For these ends, and with a design to have them accomplished, in and upon their souls, ought they to attend unto them. James i. 21. 'Receive with meekness the ingrafted word of God, which is able to save your souls.' 1 Pet. ii. 2. 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' Unto the effecting of these ends, especially the increase and establishment of our faith, are they suited and appointed of God, whereon all their efficacy doth depend. In their due observation, doth God give out that supply of grace which he hath promised, Eph. i. 16—19. and thus also is faith exercised in an especial manner, which is the only ordinary means of its growth and increase. Habits, both acquired and infused, are increased and strengthened by frequent acts on suitable objects. Hos. vi. 3. 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.' In the celebration of gospel ordinances, God in Christ proposeth himself in an intimate manner to the believing soul, as his God and reward; and his love in Christ, in an especial manner in some ordinances. So doth Christ also exhibit himself thereunto. Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Faith, therefore, directed by the word to rest in God, to receive the Lord Christ in the observatio

of his ordinances, is excited, increased, strengthened, and that in answer unto the appointment and promises of God.

Quest. 11. How are mutual love and communion among believers testified and confirmed in their observation?

Ans. In that they are appointed by the Lord Christ for that end, and in their own nature as attended unto in their assemblies, are in an especial manner suited unto that purpose. John xiii. 35. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. xi. 18, 19. Eph. iv. 4—6.

EXPLICATION.

The principles of mutual, spiritual love among believers, arise from their relation unto one father, Matt. xxiii. 9. 'One is your Father, which is in heaven:' who giveth unto all them that believe in Christ, 'power to become the sons of God;' John i. 12. And their being all children of the same family; that family in heaven and earth which is called after the name of God the Father of it, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 14, 15. and unto Christ Jesus as their elder brother, who 'is not ashamed to call them brethren,' Heb. ii. 11. being by him born of God; and from their participation of one and the selfsame Spirit, which dwelleth in them, as they are 'the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in them,' 1 Cor. iii. 16. as also in all the fruits of that one Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 4—8. and in that one faith and hope whereunto they are called, Eph. iv. 3—6. 'endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.' And that love which is not built on these principles and foundations is not evangelical, whatever other ground it may have, or occasion it may pretend unto. Communion of saints consists in their mutual love duly exercised according to rule; and all communion is an effect of union. In union therefore must lie the springs of love: and this consists in a joint incorporation of believers into Christ; 'for as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ; for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body;' and this they have by the means before mentioned, namely, their adoption, faith, and inhabitation of the

Spirit. Now in the joint celebration of the ordinances of God's worship, they altogether make professions of these principles, and act that one faith, hope, and love jointly, whereof they are made partakers, and thereby grow up more and more into the head by that which every joint supplieth; Eph. iv. 16. and some of them are peculiarly designed by the Lord Christ, for the testification of their love and union among themselves; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? as we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.'

Quest. 12. What is principally to be attended unto by us in the manner of the celebration of the worship of God, and observation of the institutions and ordinances of the gospel?

Ans. That we observe and do all whatsoever the Lord Christ hath commanded us to observe, in the way that he hath prescribed; and that we add nothing unto, or in the observation of them, that is of man's invention or appointment; Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. Jer. vii. 27. Matt. xv. 9. 13. xvii. 5. Col. ii. 3. Matt. xxviii. 20. Heb. iii. 3—6. 1 Cor. xi. 23. Rev. xxii. 18. 1 Chron. xvi. 13. Isa. xxix. 13.

EXPLICATION.

This was in part spoken to before on the third question, where it was shewed, that the Scripture is the only way and means whereby God hath revealed what that worship is, which he will accept in and of the church. Here, moreover, as to the duty of the church in this matter, three things are asserted.

First, That we are to observe and do all whatsoever the Lord Christ hath commanded us to observe. This lies plain in the command, Matt. xxviii. 20. 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' And we are directed unto it in the injunction given us from heaven, to hear, that is obey him in all things; Matt. xvii. 5. he being the prophet to whose teachings and instructions we owe obedience on pain of extermination from among the people of God; Deut. xviii. 15. Acts iii. 22, 23. Whatever he hath appointed, commanded, revealed as the

will of God to be observed in or about the worship of God, that is to be kept and observed by the church inviolably. For if we are his friends and disciples, we will keep his commandments. No disuse of what continuance soever, can discharge us from the observation of institutions. After the feast of tabernacles had been disused from the times of Joshua, unto the return from the captivity, the restoration of it was required of God and accepted with him; Neh. viii. 17. No abuse of how high a nature soever can absolve us from obedience unto an institution; 1 Cor. xviii. 19—23. After the great abuse of the Lord's supper in that church, the apostle recalls them again unto the observation of it, according to the institution of Christ. And after the defilement of all the ordinances of the gospel, under the antichristian apostacy, yet the temple and the altar are to be measured again, Rev. xi. 1. and the tabernacle of God was again to be raised amongst men; Rev. xxi. 3. No opposition, no persecution, can give the church a dispensation wholly to omit and lay aside the use of any thing that the Lord Christ hath commanded to be observed in the worship of God, whilst we are under the obligation of that great rule, Acts iv. 19. 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.' It is true, in the observation of positive institutions we may have regard unto rules and prescriptions of prudence, as to times, places, and seasons; that by no inadvertency or miscarriage of ours, or advantage taken by the adversaries of the truth, the edification of the church be hindered. So the disciples met with 'the doors shut for fear of the Jews,' John xx. 19. and Paul met with the disciples in the night, in 'an upper chamber,' for the celebration of all the ordinances of the church; Acts xx. 7, 8. Yet, as to the obligation unto their observation, it indispensably binds us, and that always, and that as to all the institutions of Christ whatever; Heb. x. 25. 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.' To dispense with Christ's commands practically is unlawful; much more doctrinally; most of all authoritatively, as the pope takes on himself to do. This then is the church's duty, *to search out all the* commands of Christ recorded in the

gospel, and to yield obedience unto them. We are not in this matter, to take up merely with what we find in practice amongst others, no, though they be men good or holy. The duty of the church, and consequently of every member of it in his place and station, is to search the Scriptures, to inquire into the mind of Christ, and to find out whatever is appointed by him, or required of his disciples; and that with hearts and minds prepared unto a due observation of whatever shall be discovered to be his will.

Secondly, Whatever belongs unto the worship of God in the way or manner whereby any of the ordinances of Christ is to be performed, comes also under the command of Christ, which is duly to be attended unto and observed. Indeed, whatever is of this nature appointed by Christ, it doth therefore belong to the worship of God. And what is not so appointed, neither doth, nor can be any part thereof. Of this nature are the celebration of all other ordinances with prayer: for 'every thing is sanctified by the word of God and prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 5. of some of them indispensably in the assemblies of the church; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. xi. 20. 24, 25. 33. with care in the observation of the general rules of love, modesty, condescension, and prudence, 'doing all things decently and in order;' 1 Cor. xi. 33. xiv. 40. gestures in some sacred actions; Matt. xxvi. 20. 26. John xiii. 23. All which the church is diligently to inquire into, as things that belong to the pattern of the house of God, the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, the forms thereof, and the ordinances thereof, with the laws thereof, promised to be shewed unto it, Ezek. xliii. 11. to attend carefully to their observation is its duty, being left at liberty as to all other circumstances, which no authority of man can give any real relation to the worship of God unto. Therein lies the exercise of that spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of the mystery of the gospel, which is given unto the church; Eph. i. 17, 18. It was the wisdom of the ancient church to do and observe all that God appointed in the way and manner that he had prescribed for their observance; Deut. iv. 5, 6. 'Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments even as the Lord my God commanded me. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and understanding.' And herein is the command of Christ kept inviolate and un-

blameable. The persuasion of some, that the Lord hath not prescribed all things wherein his worship is concerned, seems to proceed from a negligence in inquiring after what he hath so prescribed: and when once that persuasion is entertained, all farther inquiry is superseded and despised. For to what end should any one seek after that which he is satisfied cannot be found? as that which is not cannot be. But this mistake will be elsewhere more fully discovered.

Thirdly, A principal part of the duty of the church in this matter, is to take care that nothing be admitted or practised in the worship of God, or as belonging thereunto, which is not instituted and appointed by the Lord Christ. In its care, faithfulness, and watchfulness herein, consists the principal part of its loyalty unto the Lord Jesus as the head, king, and lawgiver of his church; and which to stir us up unto, he hath left so many severe interdictions and prohibitions in his word against all additions to his commands upon any pretence whatever; of which afterward.

Quest. 13. Are not some institutions of the New Testament ceased, as unto any obligation unto their observation, and therefore now rightly disused?

Ans. (1.) Some symbolical tokens of moral duties occasionally used, only for present instruction in those duties, are mentioned in the gospel, without any intention to oblige believers unto the formal constant use and repetition of them. And, (2.) Some temporary appointments relating unto gifts in the church, bestowed only for a season in the first plantation of the gospel are ceased. But, (3.) No institution or command of Christ, given unto the whole church, relating unto the evangelical administration of the new covenant, for the use and benefit of all believers, doth or shall cease to the end of the world, nor can be wholly omitted without a violation of the authority of Jesus Christ himself. John xiii. 12—15. Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 1 Tim. v. 10. Mark vi. 13. James v. 14. Matt. xxviii. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 14. 1 Cor. xi. 26.

EXPLICATION.

Mention is made in the Scriptures of sundry things practised by the Lord Christ and his apostles, which being then in common use among men, were occasionally made by them symbolical instructions in moral duties. Such were wash-

ing of feet by one another, the holy kiss, and the like; but their being no more in them, but a sanctified use directed unto the present civil customs and usages, the commands given concerning them, respect not the outward action, nor appointed any continuance of them, being peculiarly suited unto the state of things and persons in those countries; as John xiii. 12—15. 'After he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' It is evident that it is the moral duty of brotherly love, in condescension and mutual helpfulness to be expressed in all necessary offices as occasion doth require, that is the thing which Jesus Christ here enjoineth his disciples, and leads them to by his own example in an office of love then in use in those parts. The same is to be said of the 'holy kiss,' Rom. xvi. 16. which was a temporary occasional token of entire love; which may, in answer thereunto, be expressed by any sober usage of salutation amongst men to the same purpose. But the things themselves were not instituted for any continuance, nor do represent any special grace of the new covenant, which is inseparable from every institution of gospel worship properly so called. Common usages or practices, therefore, directed to be used in a due manner, and unto a proper end, where they are used, make themnot institutions of worship. Neither have they in them, as so commanded or directed, any one thing that concurs to the constitution of a gospel ordinance: for neither had they their rise in the authority of Christ, nor is any continuance of them enjoined, nor any purpose annexed unto them, nor any grace of the new covenant represented or exhibited in them.

Besides, there were in the first churches continued for awhile certain extraordinary gifts, that had their effects visible on the outward senses of men, and tended not immediately unto the edification of the church in their faith, but unto the conviction of others, and vindication of the authority of them by whom the gospel was preached and propagated. Such was that gift of healing the sick, which being an

especial effect of the Holy Ghost for the advantage of the church in those days, in some places it was accompanied by anointing with oil; but this being no universal practice, and used only in the exercise of a gift extraordinary, whose use and being has long since ceased, it never was appointed nor intended to be of continuance in the church, which is not tied by the Lord Christ to the empty signs and shadows of things whose substance is not enjoyed. Besides, no spiritual grace of the covenant was ever intimated, sealed, or exhibited by that usage of anointing with oil. The first mention of it is, Mark vi. 13. where its practice is reckoned among the effects of that extraordinary power which the Lord Christ committed unto his twelve disciples on their first sending out, and is referred unto the same series of miracles which they wrought in pursuit and by virtue thereof; 'they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.' And by what is there recorded, the subsequent mention of it, James v. 14. is to be regulated: but now unto a real evangelical institution of worship, it is required, (1.) That it be a command of Christ manifested by his word, or example proposed unto our imitation, Matt. xxviii. 20. (2.) That it be given and enjoined unto the whole church, with the limitation of its administration expressed in the word, 1 Cor. xi. 25. (3.) That unto the due performance of it, gospel grace be required in them that attend unto it. (4.) That it teach, or represent, or seal, or improve some grace of the covenant, and have a promise of acceptation annexed unto it; and whatever is thus appointed, the church is indispensably to continue in the observation of, unto the end of the world.

Quest. 14. May not the church find out, and appoint to be observed, such religious rites, as being adjoined unto the celebration of God's instituted worship, may further the devotion of the worshippers, and render the worship itself in its performance more decent, beautiful, and orderly; as the appointing of images, and the like?

Ans. All acceptable devotion in them that worship God is the effect of faith, which respects the precepts and promises of God alone. And the comeliness and beauty of gospel worship consisteth in its relation unto God by Jesus Christ, as the merciful high-priest over his house, with the glorious

administration of the Spirit therein. The order also of it lieth in the due and regular observation of all that Christ hath appointed; and therefore all such inventions are in themselves needless and useless, and because forbidden, unlawful to be observed. Rom. i. 21. xiv. 23. Heb. iv. 2. xi. 6. Deut. xiii. 4. xxvii. 10. xxx. 2. 8. 20. xi. 27. Matt. xxvii. 5. Isa. xxix. 13. Heb. xi. 4. 6. Eph. ii. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 8—11. Heb. x. 19—22. John iv. 21. 23. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Matt. xxviii. 20. Exod. xx. 4. Deut. iv. 2. Matt. xv. 13. Isa. xxix. 13. Deut. xii. 32. xvii. 3.

EXPLICATION.

Three things are usually pleaded in the justification of the observance of such rites and ceremonies in the worship of God.

First, That they tend unto the furtherance of the devotion of the worshippers.

Secondly, That they render the worship itself comely and beautiful.

Thirdly, That they are the great preservers of order in the celebration thereof. And therefore on these accounts they may be instituted, or appointed by some, and observed by all. But things are indeed quite otherwise; 'God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth;' John iv. 24. And no devotion is acceptable unto him, but what proceedeth from, and is an effect of faith, for 'without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6. and faith in all things respects the commands and authority of God; for, saith he, 'in vain do they worship me, who teach for doctrines the commandments of men;' Matt. xv. 9. and he rejecteth all that honour which is given him by those whose fear towards him, or worship of him, is 'taught by the precepts of men;' Isa. xxix. 13. These things, therefore, being utterly destitute of divine authority, they can no way further or promote the devotion of the worshippers. What natural or carnal affections may be excited by them, as men may inflame themselves with idols, Isa. lvii. 5. or what outward, outside devotion they may direct unto or excite, is uncertain; but that they are no means of stirring up the grace of God in the hearts of believers, or of the increase or strengthening of their faith, which things alone God accepts in gospel

worship, seeing they are not appointed by him for any such purpose, is most certain: for to say that any thing will effectually stir up devotion, that is, excite, strengthen, or increase grace in the heart towards God, that is not of his own appointment, is on the one hand to reflect on his wisdom and care towards his church, as if he had been wanting towards it in things so necessary, which he declares against, Isa. v. 4. 'What,' saith he, 'could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?' so on the other, it extols the wisdom of men above what is meet to ascribe unto it. Shall men find out that, which God would not, or could not, in matters of so great importance unto his glory, and the souls of them that obey him? yea, and it cannot be but that attendance unto them and their effects must needs divert the mind from those proper spiritual actings of faith and grace, which is its duty to attend unto. And this is evidently seen in them who indulging to themselves in their observation in multiplied instances, as in the church of Rome, have changed the whole spiritual worship of the church, into a theatrical pompous show of carnal devotion.

Secondly, The comeliness and beauty of gospel worship doth not in the least depend upon them, nor their observation. The apostle doth in sundry places expressly compare the spiritual worship of the gospel with that of the law, whilst the church had a worldly sanctuary and carnal ordinances, Heb. ix. 1. and although it be most evident that the worship of the Old Testament did for the glory and ornaments of outward ceremonies and the splendour of their observation, far exceed and excel that worship which God commands now, as suitable unto the simplicity of the gospel, yet doth the apostle prefer this for glory, comeliness, and beauty, unspeakably above the other; which manifests that these things can have no respect unto outward rites and ceremonies, wherein the chief admirers of them can no way vie for glory with the old worship of the temple. So the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 7—11. 'If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather

glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which was done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.' He compareth the two ministrations, and the several worships of the law and gospel, preferring this unspeakably above the other, sufficiently manifesting that the glory of it consisteth not in any pompous observance of outward ceremonies. And elsewhere he declareth, that indeed it doth consist in its relation to God in Christ, with the liberty and boldness of the worshippers to enter into the holy place, unto the throne of grace, under the ministry of their merciful and faithful High Priest, being enabled thereunto by the Spirit of adoption and supplications; for therein, 'through Christ we have an access in one Spirit unto the Father,' Eph. ii. 18. as it is expressed, Heb. x. 19—21. 'having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' This is the glory of gospel worship, and the beauty of it; whose consideration whilst the minds of men are diverted from, to look for beauty in the outward preparation of ceremonies, they lose the privilege purchased for believers by the blood of Christ. Instead, then, of furthering the beauty and comeliness of gospel worship, they are apt to lead men into a dangerous error and mistake, namely, that the beauty and excellency of it consists in such things, as upon a due consideration will appear to be mean and carnal, and far beneath those ceremonies and ordinances of the Old Testament, which yet in comparison of the worship of the gospel, are called 'worldly, carnal, beggarly,' and are said to have no glory.

Thirdly, They do not in the least tend unto the preservation of due order in the celebration of divine worship. All order consists in the due observation of rule. The rules of actions are either natural, or of his special appointment. Both these take place in religious worship; the institutions

or commands of Christ, containing the substance thereof, in their observation principally consists the order of it. Whatever is of circumstance in the manner of its performance, not capable of especial determination, as emerging or arising only occasionally upon the doing of that which is appointed at this or that time, in this or that place, and the like, is left unto the rule of moral prudence, in whose observation their order doth consist. But the super-addition of ceremonies, necessarily belonging neither to the institutions of worship, nor unto those circumstances whose disposal falls under the rule of moral prudence, neither doth nor can add any thing unto the due order of gospel worship. So that they are altogether needless and useless in the worship of God. Neither is this the whole of the inconvenience wherewith their observance is attended; for although they are not in particular, and expressly in the Scripture forbidden, for it was simply impossible that all instances wherein the wit of man might exercise its invention in such things, should be reckoned up and condemned, yet they fall directly under those severe prohibitions which God hath recorded to secure his worship from all such additions unto it, of what sort soever. Yea, the main design of the second precept is to forbid all making unto ourselves any such things in the worship of God, to add unto what he hath appointed, whereof an instance is given in that of making and worshipping images, the most common way that the sons of men were then prone to transgress by, against the institutions of God. And this sense and understanding of the commandment is secured by those ensuing prohibitions against the adding any thing at all unto the commands of God in his worship. Deut. iv. 2. 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God.' Chap. xii. 32. 'What things soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.' Chap. xvii. 3. To the same purpose were the places before mentioned, Matt. xv. 9. as also is that severe rule applied by our Saviour unto the additions of the Pharisees, ver. 13. 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.'

And there is yet farther evidence contributed unto this intention of the command, from those places where such

evils and corruptions, as were particularly forbidden in the worship of God, are condemned, not on the special account of their being so forbidden, but on that more general, of being introduced without any warrant from God's institutions or commands: Jer. vii. 31. 'They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded not, neither came it into my heart:' chap. xix. 5. 'They have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt-offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake, neither came it into my mind.' These things were particularly forbidden; but yet God here condemns them as coming under the general evil of making additions unto his commands, doing that which he commanded not, nor did it ever enter into his heart.

The Papists say, indeed, that all additions corrupting the worship of God are forbidden; but such as further, adorn, and preserve it, are not so; which implies a contradiction: for whereas every addition is principally a corruption because it is an addition, under which notion it is forbidden (and that in the worship of God which is forbidden is a corruption of it), there can be no such preserving, adorning addition, unless we will allow a preserving and adorning corruption. Neither is it of more force which is pleaded by them, that the additions which they make, belong not unto the substance of the worship of God, but unto the circumstances of it; for every circumstance observed religiously, or to be observed in the worship of God, is of the substance of it; as were all those ceremonious observances of the law which had the same respect in the prohibitions of adding, with the most weighty things whatsoever.

Quest. 15. Whence may it appear that the right and due observation of instituted worship is of great importance unto the glory of God, and of high concernment unto the souls of men?

Ans. This is fully taught in the Scriptures; as, (1.) God would never accept in any state of the church, before or since the fall, moral obedience, without the observation of some institutions as trials, tokens, and pledges of that obedience. And, (2.) In their use and signification by his ap-

pointment they nearly concern the principal mysteries of his will and grace. And, (3.) By their celebration is he glorified in the world. And therefore, (4.) As he hath made blessed promises to his people, to grant them his presence and to bless them in their us: so, (5.) Being the tokens of the marriage relation that is between him and them, with respect unto them alone he calls himself 'a jealous God;' and, (6.) Hath actually exercised signal severity towards the neglecters, corrupters, or abusers of them. (1) Gen. ii. 16, 17. iv. 3, 4. xvii. 9—11. Exod. xii. 24. xx. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. xxvi. 26, 27. Eph. iv. 11, 12. Rev. i. 13. xxi. 3. (2) Gen. xvii. 10. Exod. xii. 23, 24. Rom. vi. 3—5. Matt. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 25—27. (3) See question the eighth and ninth. (4) Exod. xxix. 42, 43. 45. Deut. xiv. 23. Psal. cxxxiii. 3. Matt. xviii. 20. Rev. xxi. 3. (5) Exod. xx. 5. Deut. iv. 23, 24. Josh. xxiv. 19. Ezek. xvi. (6) Levit. x. 1, 2. Numb. xvi. 3. 8, 9. 32. 35. 1 Sam. ii. 28, 29. 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 30.

EXPLICATION.

For the most part, the instituted worship of God is neglected and despised in the world. Some are utterly regardless of it, supposing that if they attend, after their manner, unto moral obedience, that neither God nor themselves are much concerned in this matter of his worship. Others think the disposal and ordering of it to be so left unto men, that as to the manner of its performance, they may do with it as it seems right in their own eyes; and some follow them therein as willingly walking after their commandments, without any respect unto the will or authority of God. But the whole Scripture gives us utterly another account of this matter. The honour of God in this world, the trial of our faith and obedience, the order and beauty of the church, the exaltation of Christ in his professed subjection to him, and the saving of our souls in the ways of his appointment, are therein laid upon the due and right observance of instituted worship; and they who are negligent about these things, whatever they pretend, have no real respect unto any thing that is called religion. First, therefore, in every state and condition of the church, God hath given his ordinances of worship, as the touchstone and trial of its faith and obedi-

ence, so that they by whom they are neglected, do openly refuse to come unto God's trial. In the state of innocency, the trial of Adam's obedience according to the law of nature, was in and by the institution of the trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil: Gen. ii. 16, 17. 'And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' This was the first institution of God, and it was given unto the church, in the state of innocency and purity. And in our first parents' neglect of attending thereunto, did they transgress the whole law of their creation, as failing in their duty in that which was appointed for their trial in the whole: chap. iii. 11. 'Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?' &c. And the church in his family after the fall, built upon the promise, was tried also in the matter of instituted worship. Nor was there any discovery of the wickedness of Cain, or approbation of the faith of Abel, until they came to be proved in their sacrifices, a new part of God's instituted worship; the first in the state and condition of sin and the fall whereinto it was brought. Gen. iv. 3—5. 'In process of time it came to pass, Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.' The ground whereof the apostle declares, Heb. xi. 4. 'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.' In the observation of that first institution given to the church in the state of the fall, did Abel receive a testimony of his being justified and accepted with God. Afterward, when Abraham was called, and peculiarly separated to bear forth the name of God in the world, and to become the spring of the church for future ages, he had the institution of circumcision given him for the trial of his obedience; the law and condition whereof was, that he who observed it not should be esteemed an alien from the covenant of God, and be cut off from his people: Gen. xvii. 9—11. 'God

said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.' Ver. 14. 'And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.' And in like manner, so soon as ever his posterity were to be collected into a new church-state and order, God gave them the ordinance of the passover. Exod. xii. 24. 'Ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever;' and that upon the same penalty with that of circumcision; to these he added many more on mount Sinai, Exod. xx. all as the trials of their faith and obedience unto succeeding generations. How he hath dealt with his church under the New Testament, we shall afterward declare. In no state or condition then of the church, did God ever accept of moral obedience without the observation of some instituted worship accommodated in his wisdom unto its various states and conditions. And not only so, but as we have seen, he hath made the observation of them according unto his mind and appointment, the means of the trial of men's whole obedience, and the rule of the acceptance or rejection of them. And so it continues at this day, whatever be the thoughts of men about the worship which at present he requires.

Besides, God hath appointed that his ordinances of worship shall be as effectual means as to instruct us in the mysteries of his will and mind, so of communicating his love, mercy, and grace unto us; as also of that communion or intercourse with his holy Majesty, which he hath graciously granted unto us by Jesus Christ. And this as it is sufficiently manifested in the Scriptures quoted in answer unto this question, so it is at large declared in the writings of those holy and good men, who have explained the nature of gospel ordinances, and therefore in particular we need not here insist much in the farther proof of it. Thus Abraham was instructed in the nature of the covenant of grace by circumcision, Gen. xvii. 10. which is often explained in the Old Testament, by applying it in particular to the grace of conversion, called the 'circumcision of the heart;' Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4. as also in the New

Testament, Col. ii. 11. And by the passover, where the people were taught, not only the mercy of their present deliverance, Exod. xii. 23, 24. but also to look for the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world, John i. 29. the true Passover of the people of God which was sacrificed for them; 1 Cor. v. 7. How our incision or implanting into Christ, is represented and signified by our baptism, the apostle declares, Rom. vi. 3—5. as also our communion with him in his death, by the supper of the Lord, Matt. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 25. and all these graces which they teach, they also exhibit, and are the means of the communication of them unto believers. Moreover the experience of all believers, who have conscientiously waited upon God in their due observance, may be produced in the confirmation of it. The instruction, edification, consolation, spiritual strength, courage, and resolution, which they have received in and by them, hath been witnessed unto in their lives, and ends; and they to whom these things are not of the greatest importance, do but in vain pretend a regard unto God in any thing whatever.

Furthermore, God hath appointed our duty in the observation of his instituted worship, to be the means of our glorifying him in the world. Nor can we otherwise give glory to God, but as we own his authority over us, and yield obedience to what he requires at our hands. And what we do herein, is principally evident in those duties which lie under the eye and observation of men. Some duties of obedience there are, which the world neither doth, nor can discern in believers. Such are their faith, inward holiness, purity of heart, heavenly-mindedness, sincere mortification of indwelling sin; some whose performance ought to be hid from them, as personal prayer and alms; Matt. vi. 2—6. Some there are, which are very liable to misconstruction amongst men, as zeal in many of the actings of it. But this conscientious observation of instituted worship, and therein avowing our subjection unto the authority of God in Christ, is that which the world may see, and take notice of, and that, which unless in case of persecution, ought not to be hid from them, and that which they can have no pretence of scandal at. And therefore hath God appointed that by this means and way, we shall honour and glorify

him in the world, which if we neglect, we do evidently cast off all regard unto his concernments in this world. Herein it is, that we manifest ourselves not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, of him and his words, which he so indispensably requireth at our hands, Mark viii. 38. 'For,' saith he, 'whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.' Hereby do we keep the commandments of Christ, as his friends, John xiii. 35. for these peculiarly are his commands, and if we suffer for them, then we do most properly suffer as Christians, which is our glory; that, 1 Pet. iv. 14—16. 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory, and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.' And a happy and a blessed thing it is, to suffer for the observation of the special commands of Christ.

Farther, to encourage us in our duty, the holy faithful God hath given us many great and precious promises, that he will graciously afford unto us his especial sanctifying blessing presence, in our attendance on his worship according to his appointment. For as he promised of old that he would make glorious the place of his feet, or abode amongst his people, Isa. lx. 13. that he would meet them in his sanctuary, the place of his worship, and there dwell amongst them, and bless them, and be their God, Exod. xxix. 42—45. Deut. xiv. 24. so the Lord Jesus Christ hath promised his presence to the same ends and purposes, unto all them that assemble together in his name, for the observation of the worship which in the gospel he hath appointed; Matt. xiv. 20. 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' And therein is the tabernacle of God, his gracious dwelling-place with men; Rev. xxi. 3. Now when God offereth unto us his presence, his gracious blessing, sanctifying, and saving presence, and that in and by promises which shall never fail, what unspeakable guilt must we needs contract upon our

own souls, if we neglect or despise the tenders of such grace?

But because we are apt to be slothful, and are slow of heart in admitting a due sense of spiritual things that fall not in with the light and principles of nature, to stir us up unto a diligence in our attendance unto the will of God in this matter, he hath declared that he looks upon our obedience herein as our whole loyalty unto him in that conjugal covenant which he is pleased in Christ Jesus to take believers into with himself. Jer. iii. 14, 15. 'Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you, and will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and will bring you unto Zion: and I will give you pastors according unto mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.' Coming unto Zion, in the worship of God, under the leading and conduct of pastors according to the heart of God, is our answering the relation wherein we stand unto him as he is married unto us; and thereupon he teacheth us that as a husband, he is jealous of our discharge of our duty in this matter, accounting our neglect of his worship, or profanation of it by inventions and additions of our own, to be spiritual disloyalty, whoredom and adultery, which his soul abhorreth, for which he will cast off any church, or people, and that for ever. See Exod. xx. 5. Deut. iv. 23, 24. Josh. xxiv. 19. Ezek. xvi. Whatever he will bear withal in his church, he will not bear with that which his jealousy is exercised about. If it transgress therein, he will give it a bill of divorce; which repudiated condition, is the state of many churches in the world, however they please and boast themselves in their meritorious ornaments and practices.

To give yet farther strength unto all these considerations, that we may not only have rules and precepts, but examples also for our instruction, God hath given many signal instances of his severity against persons who by ignorance, neglect, or regardlessness, have miscarried in not observing exactly his will and appointment in and about his worship. This was the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron; Levit. x. 1, 2. of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram; Numb. xvi. 3. 8, 9. 32. 35. of the sons of Eli, a sin not to be 'expiated with sacrifices and burnt-offerings for ever;'

1 Sam. ii. 28, 29. of Uzza in putting the ark into a cart, when he should have borne it upon his shoulders; 1 Chron. xvi. 13. of Uzziah the king in offering incense contrary to God's institution, that duty being appropriated unto the priests of the posterity of Aaron; 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. 19. These are sufficient intimations of what care and diligence we ought to use in attending unto what God hath appointed in his worship; and although now under the New Testament he doth not ordinarily proceed to the inflicting of temporal judgments in the like cases of neglect, yet he hath not wholly left us without instances of his putting forth tokens of his displeasure in temporal visitations on such miscarriages in his church: 1 Cor. xi. 30. 'For this cause,' saith the apostle, 'many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.' From all which it appears of what concernment it is unto the glory of God, and the salvation of our own souls, to attend diligently unto our duty in the strict and sincere observation of the worship of the gospel; for he lets us know, that now a more severe punishment is substituted against such transgressions in the room of that which he so visibly inflicted under the Old Testament; Heb. x. 25—29.

Quest. 16. 'Is there yet any other consideration that may stir up believers to a holy and religious care about the due observation of the institutions of the gospel?

Ans. Yea; namely, that the great apostacy of the church in the last days, foretold in the Scripture, and which God threateneth to punish and revenge, consists principally in false worship, and a departure from the institutions of Christ; Rev. xiv. 4, 5. xvii. 1—5.

EXPLICATION.

That there is an apostacy of the church foretold in the book of the Revelation, is acknowledged by all who with sincerity have inquired into the mind of God therein. The state of things at this day, and for many ages past in the world, sufficiently confirm that persuasion. And herei sundry things in general, are obvious unto every sober consideration thereof.

First, The horrible evils, troubles, and confusions that are to be brought into and upon the world thereby.

Secondly, The high guilt and provocation of God that is contained in it, and doth accompany it.

Thirdly, The dreadful vengeance that God in his appointed time will take upon all the promoters and obstinate maintainers of it. These things are at large all of them foretold in the Revelation, and therein also the apostacy itself is set forth as the cause of all the plagues and destructions that by the righteous judgment of God, are to be brought upon the world in these latter days. Now as God doth earnestly call upon all that fear him, not to intermeddle, nor partake in the sins of the apostates, lest they should also partake in their judgments; chap. xviii. 4. 'I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues;' so he doth plainly declare, wherein the apostacy and sin itself should principally consist, and that is in the corrupting and contaminating of the ordinances of his worship, or the introduction of false worship joined with the persecution of them who refused to submit thereunto. For this cause is the sin itself set out under the name of fornication and whoredom, and the church that maintains it, is called, 'the mother of harlots;' chap. xvii. 5. That by fornication and whoredom, in the church, the adulterating of the worship of God, and the admission of false self-invented worship in the room thereof, whereof God is jealous, is intended, the Scripture everywhere declares. It is easy then to gather of how great concernment unto us it is, especially in these latter days wherein this so heinous and provoking sin is prevalent in the world, carefully to attend unto the safe unerring rule of worship, and diligently to perform the duties that are required therein.

Quest. 17. Which are the principal institutions of the gospel to be observed in the worship of God?

Ans. (1.) The calling, gathering, and settling of churches with their officers, as the seat and subject of all other solemn instituted worship. (2.) Prayer with thanksgiving. (3.) Singing of psalms. (4.) Preaching the word. (5.) Administration of the sacraments of baptism, and the supper of the Lord. (6.) Discipline and rule of the church collected and settled; most of which have also sundry particular duties relating unto them, and subservient unto their due observation.

(1) Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Acts ii. 41, 42. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11, 12. Matt. xviii. 17—19. 1 Cor. iv. 17. vii. 17. Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 15. (2) 1 Tim. ii. 1. Acts vi. 4. xiii. 2, 3. (3) Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. (4) 2 Tim. iv. 2. Acts ii. 42. 1 Cor. xiv. 3. Acts vi. 2. Heb. xiii. 7. (5) Matt. xxviii. 19. xxvi. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xi. 23. (6) Matt. xviii. 17—19. Rom. xii. 6—8. Rev. ii. 3.

EXPLICATION.

These things being all of them afterward to be spoken unto severally and apart, need not here any particular explication. They are the principal heads wherein gospel worship consisteth, and whereunto the particular duties of it may be reduced.

Quest. 18. Whereas sundry of these things are founded in the light and law of nature, as requisite unto all solemn worship, and are moreover commanded in the moral law, and explications of it in the Old Testament; how do you look upon them as evangelical institutions, to be observed principally on the authority of Jesus Christ?

Ans. Neither their general suitableness unto the principles of right reason, and the dictates of the light and law of nature, nor the practice of them in the worship of God under the Old Testament, do at all hinder them from depending on the mere institution of Jesus Christ, as to those especial ends of the glory of God in and by himself, and the edification of his church in the faith which is in him, whereunto he hath appointed them; nor as unto that especial manner of their performance which he requireth; in which respects they are to be observed on the account of his authority and command only. Matt. xvii. 5. xxviii. 20. John xvi. 23, 24. Heb. iii. 4—6. Eph. i. 22. ii. 20—22. Heb. xii. 25.

EXPLICATION.

The principal thing we are to aim at in the whole worship of God, is the discharge of that duty which we owe to Jesus Christ the King and Head of the church: Heb. iii. 6. 'Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we.' 1 Tim. iii. 15. 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church

of the living God.' This we cannot do unless we consider his authority as the formal reason and cause of our observance of all that we do therein. If we perform any thing in the worship of God on any other account, it is no part of our obedience unto him; and so we can neither expect his grace to assist us, nor have we his promise to accept us therein; for that he hath annexed unto our doing and observing whatever he hath commanded, and that because he hath commanded us. Matt. xxviii. 20. 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' This promised presence respects only the observance of his commands. Some men are apt to look on this authority of Christ as that which hath the least influence into what they do. If in any of his institutions they find any thing that is suited or agreeable unto the light of nature, as ecclesiastical societies, government of the church, and the like, they say are, they suppose and contend, that that is the ground on which they are to be attended unto, and so are to be regulated accordingly. The interposition of his authority they will allow only in the sacraments, which have no light in reason or nature; so desirous are some to have as little to do with Christ as they can, even in the things that concern the worship of God. But it would be somewhat strange, that if what the Lord Christ hath appointed in his church to be observed in particular, in an especial manner, for especial ends of his own, hath in the general nature of it an agreement with what in like cases the light of nature seems to direct unto, that therefore his authority is not to be considered, as the sole immediate reason of our performance of it. But it is evident,

First, That our Lord Jesus Christ being the King and Head of his church, the Lord over the house of God, nothing is to be done therein but with respect unto his authority. Matt. xvii. 5. 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.' Eph. iv. 15. 'Speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in

love.' Chap. ii. 20—22. 'Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.'

Secondly, And that therefore, the suitableness of any thing to right reason, or the light of nature, is no ground for a church-observation of it, unless it be also appointed and commanded in especial by Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, That being so appointed and commanded, it becomes an especial institution of his, and as such, is to be observed; so that in all things that are done, or to be done with respect unto the worship of God in the church, the authority of Christ is always principally to be considered; and every thing to be observed as commanded by him, without which consideration it hath no place in the worship of God.

Quest. 19. What is an instituted church of the gospel?

Ans. A society of persons, called out of the world, or their natural worldly state, by the administration of the word and Spirit, unto the obedience of the faith, or the knowledge and worship of God in Christ, joined together in a holy band, or by special agreement, for the exercise of the communion of saints in the due observation of all the ordinances of the gospel. Rom. i. 5, 6. 1 Cor. i. 2. xiv. 15. Heb. iii. 1. James i. 18. Rev. i. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 21—23. 2 Cor. vi. 16—18.

EXPLICATION.

The church, whose nature is here inquired after, is not the catholic church of elect believers of all ages and seasons from the beginning of the world unto the end thereof, nor of any one age, nor the universality of professors of the gospel; but a particular church, wherein, by the appointment of Christ, all the ordinances of the worship of God are to be observed and attended unto according to his will. For although it be required of them, of whom a particular church is constituted, that they be true believers, seeing that unless a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, and so on that account they be members of the church

catholic; as also that they make visible profession of faith and obedience unto Jesus Christ; yet moreover it is the will, command, and appointment of Christ, that they should be joined together in particular societies, or churches, for the due observation of the ordinances of the gospel, which can alone be done in such assemblies. For as the members of the catholic church are not known unto one another merely on the account of that faith and union with Christ which makes them so, whence the whole society of them is, as such, invisible to the world and themselves, visible only on the account of their profession, and therefore cannot merely, as such, observe the ordinances of the gospel, which observation is their profession; so the visible professors that are in the world in any age, cannot at any time assemble together, which from the nature of the thing itself, and the institution of Christ, is indispensably necessary for the celebration of sundry parts of that worship which he requires in his church; and therefore particular churches are themselves an ordinance of the New Testament, as the national church of the Jews was of old. For when God of old erected his worship, and enjoined the solemn observation of it, he also appointed a church as his institution for the due celebration of it. That was, the people of Israel solemnly taken into a church relation with him by covenant, wherein they took upon themselves to observe all the laws, and ordinances, and institutions of his worship. Exod. xx. 19. 'Speak thou with us, and we will hear.' Chap. xxiv. 3. 'And Moses came, and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said, we will do.' Deut. v. 27. 'All that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, we will hear it and do it.' And God accordingly appointed them ordinances to be observed by the whole congregation of them together at the same time, in the same place. Exod. xxiii. 17. 'Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God.' Deut. xvi. 16. 'Three times in a year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose.'

Neither would God allow any stranger, any one not of the church so instituted by him, to celebrate any part of his

stituted worship, until he was solemnly admitted into at church as a member thereof. Exod. xii. 47, 48. 'All e congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger all sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the ord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him me near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.'

To the same end and purpose, when the knowledge of od was to be diffused all the world over by the preaching the gospel, and believers of all nations under heaven ere to be admitted unto the privilege of his worship, ph. ii. 15—18. the national church of the Jews with all e ordinances of it being removed and taken away, the ord Christ hath appointed particular churches, or united semblies of believers, amongst and by whom he will have l his holy ordinances of worship celebrated. And this stitution of his, as the first preaching of the gospel, was variably and inviolably observed by all that took on them be his disciples, without any one instance of questioning to the contrary in the whole world, or the celebration of y ordinances of his worship amongst any persons, but ly in such societies or particular churches. And here is fficient evidence and warranty of this institution given us the Scripture. For,

First, They are appointed and approved by Christ. Matt. viii. 15—20. 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he all hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he ill not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be stablished. And if he shall neglect to hear them, then tell it nto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let im be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be ound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth hall be loosed also in heaven. Again I say unto you, That two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing hat they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father hich is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'

Such a church he supposeth and approveth, as his dis-

ciples had relation unto, and as any one of them could have recourse unto as a brother, in obedience to his commands and directions. This could not be the church of the Jews, neither in its whole body, nor in any of its judicatories. For as at that time there was a solemn decree of excommunication against all and every one that should profess his name; John ix. 22. 'The Jews had already agreed, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue;' which was executed accordingly upon the man that was born blind; ver. 34. which utterly disabled them from making any use of this direction, command, or institution of his for the present; so afterward the chief business of the rulers of those assemblies from the highest court of their sanhedrim, to the meanest judicatory in their synagogues, was to persecute them, and bring them unto death. Matt. x. 17. 'They will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.' John xv. 21. And it is not likely that the Lord Christ would send his disciples for direction and satisfaction in the weighty matters of their obedience unto him, and mutual love towards one another, unto them with whom they neither had, nor could, nor ought to have any thing to do withal; and if they were intended, they were all already made as heathens and publicans, being cast out by them for refusing to hear them in their blasphemies and persecutions of Christ himself. Such a society also is plainly intended, as whereunto Christ promiseth his presence by his Spirit, and whose righteous sentences he takes upon himself to ratify and confirm in heaven.

Moreover such a church doth he direct unto, as with which his disciples were to have familiar, brotherly, constant converse and communion, with whom they were so to be joined in society, as to be owned or rejected by them according to their judgment, as is apparent in the practice enjoined unto them; and without relation whereunto no duty here appointed could be performed. As, therefore, the very name of the church, and nature of the thing, bespeaks a society, so it is evident that no society but that of a particular church of the gospel can be here intended.

Secondly, These churches he calls his 'candlesticks,' Rev. i. 20. in allusion unto the candlesticks of the temple, *which* being an institution of the Old Testament, doth

directly declare these churches to be so under the New. And this he speaks in reference unto those seven principal churches of Asia, every one of which was a candlestick or an institution of his own.

Thirdly, In pursuit of this appointment of Christ, and by his authority, the apostles, so soon as any were converted unto the faith at Jerusalem, although the old national church-state of the Jews was yet continued, gathered them into a church or society for celebration of the ordinances of the gospel. Acts ii. 41, 42. 'They that gladly received the word were baptized. And they continued steadfastly together in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.' Ver. 47. 'The Lord adding unto this church daily such as should be saved.' And this company is expressly called the 'church at Jerusalem,' Acts viii. 1. This church, thus called and collected out of the church of the Jews, was the rule and pattern of the disposing of all the disciples of Christ into church-societies, in obedience unto his command throughout the world; Acts xi. 26. xiv. 23. 27.

Fourthly, They took care for the forming, completing, and establishing them in order according to his will, under the rule of them, given and granted unto them by himself for that purpose, all in a steady pursuit of the commands of Christ. Acts xiv. 23. 'They ordained them elders in every church.' Titus i. 5. 'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.' 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Fifthly, They do everywhere in the name and authority of Christ, give unto these churches rulers, directions, and precepts for the due ordering of all things relating to the worship of God, and according to his mind, as we shall see afterward in particular. For,

1. There is no charge given unto the officers, ministers, guides, or overseers that he hath appointed, but it is in reference unto the discharge of their duty in such churches. That ministers or officers are of Christ's appointment, is expressly declared, Eph. iv. 11, 12. 'He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the

ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.' 1 Cor. xii. 28. 'God hath set in his church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.' These are of Christ's institution,—but to what end? Why, as they were ordained in every church; Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5. so their whole charge is limited to the churches. Acts xx. 17, 18. 28. 'He sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church, and said to them, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with is own blood.' 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. 'The elders which are among you, I exhort; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.' 1 Tim. iii. 15. Col. iv. 17. 'And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.' They were the churches of Christ wherein they ministered, which Christ appointing them to take care of, manifests to be his own institution and appointment. And this is fully declared, Rev. ii. 3. where all the dealings of Christ with his angels, or ministers, are about their behaviour and deportment among his candlesticks, each of them; the candlestick whereunto he was related, or the particular churches that they had care of, and presided in; the candlesticks being no less of the institution of Christ, than the angels. And they were distinct particular churches which had their distinct particular officers, whom he treateth distinctly withal about his institutions and worship; especially about that of the state of the churches themselves, and their constitution according to his mind.

2. There is no instruction, exhortation, or reproof given unto any of the disciples of Christ after his ascension, in any of the books of the New Testament, but as they were collected into, and were members of, such particular churches. This will be evidenced in the many instances of those duties that shall afterward be insisted on. And the Lord Christ hath not left that as a matter of liberty, choice, or conveniency, which he hath made the foundation of the due manner of the performance of all those duties whereby his disciples yield obedience unto his commands, to his glory in the world.

Sixthly, The principal writings of the apostles are ex-

pressly directed unto such churches, and all of them intentionally; 1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. Gal. i. 2. Phil. i. 1. Col. i. 2. iv. 16. 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. Eph. i. 1. compared with Acts xx. 17. 1 Pet. v. 2. or unto particular persons, giving directions for their behaviour and duty in such churches; 1 Tim. iii. 15. Titus i. 5. So that the great care of the apostles was about these churches, as the principal institution of Christ, and that whereon the due observance of all his other commands doth depend. Of what nature or sort these churches were, shall be afterward evinced; we here only manifest their institution by the authority of Christ.

Seventhly, Much of the writings of the apostles in those epistles directed to those churches, consists in rules, precepts, instructions, and exhortations for the guidance and preservation of them in purity, and order, with their continuance in a condition of due obedience unto the Lord Christ. To this end do they so fully and largely acquaint the rulers and members of them with their mutual duty in that especial relation wherein they stand to each other, as also of all persons in particular in what is required of them by virtue of their membership in any particular society; as may be seen at large in sundry of Paul's epistles. And to give more strength hereunto, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the revelation that he made of his mind and will personally after his ascension into heaven, insisted principally about the condition, order, and preservation of particular churches; not taking notice of any of his disciples not belonging to them, or joined with them. These he warns, reproves, instructs, threatens, commands, all in order to their walking before him in the condition of particular churches, Rev. ii. and iii. at large.

Besides, As he hath appointed them to be the seat and subject of all his ordinances, having granted the right of them unto them alone, 1 Tim iii. 15. intrusting them with the exercise of that authority which he puts forth in the rule of his disciples in this world, he hath also appointed the most holy institution of his supper to denote and express that union and communion which the members of each of these churches have by his ordinance among themselves. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which

we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.' And also he gives out unto them the gifts and graces of his Spirit, to make every one of them meet for, and useful in, that place which he holds in such churches, as the apostle discourseth at large, 1 Cor. xii. 15—26. Col. ii. 19. Eph. iv. 16. It is manifest, then, that no ordinance of Christ is appointed to be observed by his disciples, no communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost is promised to them, no especial duty is required of them, but with respect unto these churches of his institution.

In the answer to this question, four things are declared tending to the explication of the nature of a particular church or churches.

1. The subject matter of them, or the persons whereof such a church doth or ought to consist. 2. The means whereby they are brought into a condition capable of such an estate, or qualified for it. 3. The general ends of their calling. 4. The especial means whereby they are constituted a church; which last will be spoken unto in the next question.

For the first, All men are by nature the children of wrath, and do belong unto the world, which is the kingdom of Satan, and are under the power of darkness, as the Scripture everywhere declares. In this state, men are not subjects of the kingdom of Christ, nor meet to become members of his church. Out of this condition, they cannot deliver themselves. They have neither will unto it, nor power for it, but they are called out of it: this calling is that which effectually delivers them from the kingdom of Satan, and translates them into the kingdom of Christ. And this work or effect the Scripture on several accounts variously expresseth: sometimes by regeneration, or a new birth; sometimes by conversion, or turning unto God; sometimes by vivification, or quickening from the dead; sometimes by illumination, or opening of the eyes of the blind: all which are carried on by sanctification in holiness, and attended with justification and adoption. And as these are all distinct in themselves, having several formal reasons of them; so they all concur to complete that effectual vocation or calling *that is* required to constitute persons members of the church.

for besides that this is signified by the typical holiness of
he church of old, into the room whereof real holiness was
succeed under the New Testament, Exod. xix. 6. Psal.
liv. 3—6. xv. 1, 2. Isa. xxxv. 8, 9. liv. 13. lx. 21. 1 Pet.
9. our Lord Jesus Christ hath laid it down as an ever-
sting rule, that unless 'a man be born again, he cannot
ter into the kingdom of God;' John iii. 3. requiring re-
neration as an indispensable condition in a member of his
urch, a subject of his kingdom. For his temple is now
be built of living stones; 1 Pet. ii. 5. Men spiritually
d savingly quickened from their death in sin and by the
oly Ghost, whereof they are partakers, made a meet habi-
tion of God, Eph. ii. 21, 22. 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi.
. which receiving vital supplies from Christ its head, in-
easeth in faith and holiness, edifying itself in love; Eph.
. 15, 16. And as the apostles in their writings do ascribe
nto all the churches, and the members of them, a partici-
ation in this effectual vocation, affirming that they are
aints, called, sanctified, justified,' and accepted with God
Christ; Rom. i. 5, 6. 1 Cor. i. 2. iv. 15. Heb. iii. 1.
mes i. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. 1 Cor. vi. 11.
, many of the duties that are required of them, in that re-
tion and condition, are such, as none can perform unto
e glory of God, their own benefit, and the edification of
hers (the ends of all obedience), unless they are partakers
f this effectual calling; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. 1 Cor. xii. 12.
ph. iv. 16. Add hereunto that these churches and the
embers of them, are not only commanded to separate
emselves, as to their worship of God, from the world, that
, men in their worldly state and condition, but are also re-
uired when any amongst them transgress against the rules
nd laws of this holy calling above described, to cast them
ut of their society and communion; 1 Cor. v. 13. from all
hich it appears, who are the subject matter of these
hurches of Christ; as also, secondly, the means whereby
ey come to be so, namely, the administration of the Spirit
nd word of Christ; and, thirdly, the general ends of their
alling, which are all spoken to in this answer.

Quest. 20. By what means do persons so called become
church of Christ?

Ans. They are constituted a church, and interested in the

rights, power, and privileges of a gospel church, by the will, promise, authority, and law of Jesus Christ, upon their own voluntary consent and engagement to walk together in the due subjection of their souls and consciences unto his authority, as their king, priest, and prophet, and in a holy observation of all his commands, ordinances, and appointments. Matt. xviii. 20. xxviii. 18, 19. Acts ii. 41, 42. Exod. xxiv. 3. Deut. v. 27. Psal. cx. 3. Isa. xliv. 5. lix. 21. Eph. iv. 7—10. 2 Cor. viii. 5.

EXPLICATION.

That the Lord Christ hath constituted such a church-state as that which we inquire about, hath been proved already. Unto a church so constituted, he hath also by his word and promise annexed all those privileges and powers, which we find a church to be intrusted withal. This he hath done by the standing and unalterable law of the gospel, which is the charter of their spiritual society and incorporation. Neither are, nor can any persons be interested in the rights of a church any otherwise, but by virtue of this law and constitution. This therefore is first to be laid down, that the sole moral foundation of that church-state which we inquire after, is laid in the word, law, and appointment of Christ. He alone hath authority to erect such a society, he is the builder of this house, as well as the lord over it, Heb. iii. 3. 6. neither without it can all the authority of men in the world appoint such a state, or erect a church, and all acceptable actings of men herein, are no other but acts of pure obedience unto Christ.

Furthermore, we have declared that the Lord Christ, by the dispensation of his word and Spirit, doth prepare and fit men to be subjects of his kingdom, members of his church; the work of sending forth the means of the conversion of the souls of men, of translating them from the power of darkness into light, he hath taken upon himself, and doth effectually accomplish it in every generation. And by this means he builds his church; Matt. xviii. 20. For unto all persons so called, he gives command that they shall do and observe whatever he hath appointed them to do, Matt. xxviii. 20. in particular, that they profess their subjection to him, and their obedience, in joining themselves in that state wherein

they may be enabled to observe all his other laws and institutions, with the whole worship of God required therein. Being converted unto God by his word and Spirit, they are to consider, how they may now obey the Lord Christ in all things. Amongst his commands, this of joining themselves in church-societies wherein he hath promised his presence with them, Matt. xviii. 20. that is, to dwell amongst them by his word and Spirit, Isa. lix. 21. is the very first. This, by virtue of that command and promise of his, they are warranted and enabled to do; nor do they need any other warrant. The authority of Christ is sufficient to bear men out in the discharge of their duty to him. Being then made willing and ready in the day of his power, Psal. cx. 3. they consent, choose, and agree to walk together in the observation of all his commands. And hereby do they become a church. For their becoming a church, is an act of their willing obedience unto Christ. This is an act of their wills, guided by rule: for this also is necessary that they proceed herein according to the rules of his appointment afterward to be unfolded. And herein, upon their obedience unto the commands of Christ, and faith in his promises, do believers, by virtue of his law and constitution, become a gospel church, and are really and truly interested in all the power, rights, and privileges, that are granted unto any church of Christ. For in this obedience they do these two things, which alone he requires in any persons for the obtaining of an interest in these privileges. First, They confess him, his person, his authority, his law, his grace. Secondly, They take upon themselves the observance of all his commands.

Thus did God take the children of Israel into a church-state of old. He proposed unto them the church obedience that he required of them, and they voluntarily and freely took upon themselves the performance of it. Exod. xxiv. 3. 'And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do.' So Deut. v. 7. And hereby they had their solemn admission into their church-state, and relation unto God. And the like course they took whenever there was need of renewing their engagements. Josh. xxiv. 18. 21, 22. '*And the people said,* We will serve the Lord; for he is our

God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.' This was the covenant that was between God and that people, which was solemnly renewed so often as the church was eminently reformed. Now although the outward solemnity and ceremonies of this covenant were peculiar unto that people, yet as to the substance and nature of it in a sacred consent for the performance of all those duties towards God and one another which the nature and edification of a church do require, it belongs to every church, as such, even under the gospel.

And this is the way whereby believers or the disciples of Christ do enter into this state, the formal constituting cause of any church. This account doth the apostle give of the churches of the Macedonians, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 'And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God,' before the performance of other duties; and in order thereunto, they first gave themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, or took upon themselves the observance of his commands and institutions, which is the intendment of that expression. Among these commands one was, that they should give up themselves to the apostles' doctrine, rule, and government in the order by Christ prescribed; that is, in church-order. This therefore they did by the will of God, according to his will and appointment. This description doth the apostle give of the way whereby the believers of Macedonia were brought into churches. It was by their own obedience unto the will of God, consenting, agreeing, and taking upon themselves the observation of all the commands and institutions of Christ, according to the direction and guidance of the apostles. So did the believers at Jerusalem; Acts ii. 41, 42. Being converted by the word, and making profession of that conversion in their baptism, they gave up themselves to a steadfast continuance in the observation of all other ordinances of the gospel.

Besides, the church is a house, a temple, the 'house of God,' 1 Tim. iii. 15. 'the house of Christ,' Heb. iii. 6. 'the temple of God;' Eph. ii. 21, 22. Believers singly considered are 'stones, living stones;' 1 Pet. ii. 5. Now how shall these 'living stones' come to be a house, a temple?

can it be by occasional occurrences, civil cohabitation in political precincts, usage, or custom of assembling for some parts of worship in any place? These things will never frame them into a house or temple. This can be no otherwise done but by their own voluntary consent and disposition. Eph. ii. 19—22. 'Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' Chap. iv. 16. 'From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.' From these and sundry other places it is manifest, that the way and means of believers' coalition into a church-state, is their own obedience of faith, acting itself in a joint voluntary consent to walk together in a holy observation of the commands of Christ, whence the being and union of a particular church is given unto any convenient number of them by his law and constitution.

Quest. 21. Seeing the church is a society of spiritual incorporation of persons under rule, government, or discipline, declare who or what are the rulers, governors, or officers therein under Jesus Christ?

Ans. They have been of two sorts: 1. extraordinary, appointed for a season only; and, 2. ordinary, to continue unto the end of the world.

Quest. 22. Who are the extraordinary officers, or rulers, or ministers of the church, appointed to serve the Lord Jesus Christ therein for a season only?

Ans. (1.) The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; with, (2.) the evangelists and prophets, endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, associated with them, and employed by them in their works and ministry. (1) Matt. x. 2, 3. Acts i. 26. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. (2) Luke x. 1. 2 Tim. iv. 5. Titus i. 5. Acts xi. 27, 28. xxi. 9—11. 2 Cor. i. 1.

EXPLICATION.

That the church is a spiritual corporation, attended

with rule and government, is evident from the nature of the thing itself and testimonies of Scripture. Only as the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, or worldly, so this rule and government of the church is not merely external, and secular, but spiritual. Neither doth this rule at all belong unto it, merely as materially considered, in men yielding obedience unto the call which is the foundation of the church, nor absolutely as it is formally constituted a church by the consent and agreement described; but moreover it is required that it be organically complete with officers or rulers. Now to the constitution of such a society or corporation, there is required,

First, That the persons whereof it is constituted do consent together into it for the attaining of the ends which they design. Without this no society of any kind can exist. This is the form of men's coalescency into societies. And that there is in the church such consent and agreement hath been shewed.

Secondly, That there be rules or laws for the guidance and direction of all the members of the society, in order to their pursuit of the proper ends of it. That such rules or laws are given and prescribed by the Lord Christ unto the church, will afterward appear in our consideration of them in particular, so that the church is a society of men walking according unto rule or law for the attaining of the ends of the society.

Thirdly, That there be authority instituted for to see to the due observation of these rules and laws of the society, which consists in this: 1. That some be appointed to rule and govern in the church. 2. Others to obey and be ruled or governed; both according to the laws of the society, and not otherwise. And both these are eminently found in this church-state, as we shall see in the ensuing question with their answers and explications.

Now that these officers, or rulers, should be of two sorts, both the nature of the thing itself required, and so hath our Lord Jesus Christ appointed. For when the church was first to be called, gathered, and erected, it was necessary that some persons should be extraordinarily employed in that work; for ordinary officers, antecedent unto the calling and erection of the church, there could be none. And therefore

these persons were in an extraordinary manner endowed with all that power which afterward was to reside in the churches themselves; and moreover with that, which was peculiarly needful unto the discharge and performance of that special duty and work that they were appointed unto. But when churches were called, gathered, erected, and settled for continuance, there was need of officers suited to their state and condition, called in an ordinary way; that is, in a way appointed for continuance unto the end of the world, and to be employed in the ordinary work of the church, that is the duties of it, which were constantly incumbent on it by virtue of the command and appointment of Christ.

Quest. 23. Who are the ordinary officers or ministers of Christ in the church to be always continued therein?

Ans. Those whom the Scripture calls pastors and teachers, bishops, elders, and guides. Acts xiv. 23. xx. 17, 18. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2. v. 17. Titus i. 5. 7. Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 1 Pet. v. 1.

EXPLICATION.

Several names, are on several accounts, partly designing their authority, partly their duty, and partly the manner of their discharge thereof, assigned in the Scripture to the ordinary ministers of the churches. Sometimes they are called 'pastors and teachers,' Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 28. sometimes 'bishops' or 'overseers,' Phil. i. 1. Acts xx. 28. Titus i. 5. sometimes 'elders,' 1 Pet. v. 1. 1 Tim. v. 17. Acts xiv. 23. xx. 17. sometimes 'guides;' Heb. xiii. 7. 17. By all which names, and sundry others, whereby they are expressed, the same sort, order, and degree of persons is intended. Nor is any one of these names applied or accommodated unto any, but all the rest are also in like manner; so that he who is a pastor or a teacher, is also a bishop or overseer, a presbyter or elder, a guide or ruler, a minister, a servant of the church for the Lord's sake. And of all other names assigned to the ministers of the church, that of bishop can least of all be thought to have designed any special order or degree of pre-eminence amongst them. For whereas it is but four times, or in four places used in *the New Testament* as denoting any officers of the church,

in each of them it is manifest, that those expressed by the other names of elders and ministers are intended. So Acts xx. 28. the bishops are the elders of the particular church of Ephesus, ver. 17. Phil. i. 1. There were many bishops in that one particular church, who had only deacons joined with them; that is, they were the elders of it; Titus i. 8. The bishops were the elders to be ordained, ver. 5. which persons are also directly intended, 1 Tim. iii. 2. as is evident from the coincidence of the directions given by the apostle about them, and the immediate adjoining of deacons unto them; ver. 8. So that no name could be fixed on with less probability, to assert from it a special supreme order or degree of men in ministry, than this of bishops. Neither is there any mention in any place of Scripture, of any such pre-eminence of one sort of these church-officers or ministers over another; not in particular in those places where the officers of the church are in an especial manner enumerated; as 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. Rom. xii. 5—8. Nor is there any mention of any special office that should be peculiar unto such officers, or of any gifts or qualifications that should be required in them; or of any special way of calling or setting apart to their office; nor of any kind of church that they should relate unto, different from the churches that other elders or pastors do minister in; nor of any special rule or direction for their trial; nor any command for obedience unto them, but what are common to all ministers of the churches of Christ duly discharging their trust, and performing their duty; no intimation is given unto either elders or ministers to obey them; or directions how to respect them; nor unto them how to behave themselves towards them; but all these things are spoken and delivered promiscuously and equally, concerning all ministers of the gospel. It is evident then that these appellations do not belong unto one sort of ministers, not one more than another; and for what is pleaded by some, from the example of Timothy and Titus, it is said, that when any persons can prove themselves to be evangelists, 1 Tim. iv. 5. to be called unto their office upon antecedent prophecy, chap. i. 18. and to be sent by the apostles, and in an especial manner to be directed by them in some employment for a season, which they are not ordinarily to attend unto, Titus i. 5. iii. 12.

it will be granted that they have another duty and office committed unto them, than those who are only bishops or elders in the Scripture.

Quest. 24. What are the principal differences between these two sorts of officers or rulers in the church, extraordinary?

Ans. (1.) The former were called to their office immediately by Jesus Christ in his own person, or revelation made by the Holy Ghost in his name to that purpose; the latter by the suffrage, choice, and appointment of the church itself. (2.) The former, both in their office and work, were independent on, and antecedent unto, all or any churches, whose calling and gathering depended on their office as its consequent and effect; the latter, in both consequent unto the calling, gathering, and constituting of the churches themselves, as an effect thereof, in their tendency unto completeness and perfection. (3.) The authority of the former being communicated unto them immediately by Jesus Christ, without any intervenient actings of any church, extended itself equally unto all churches whatever; that of the latter being derived unto them from Christ by the election and designation of the church, is in the exercise of it confined unto that church wherein and whereby it is so derived unto them. (4.) They differ also in the gifts which were suited unto their several distinct works and employments. ([1]) Matt. x. 2. Luke x. 1. Gal. i. 1. Acts i. 26. vi. 3. xiv. 23. ([2]) John xx. 21—23. Gal. i. 1. Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14. Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5. 7. ([3]) Matt. xxviii. 18—20. 2 Cor. xi. 28. Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 2. Col. iv. 17. ([4]) 1 Cor. xii. 28—30. The answer hereunto is such as needs no farther explication.

Quest. 25. What is required unto the due constitution of an elder, pastor, or teacher of the church?

Ans. (1.) That he be furnished with the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the church, and the evangelical discharge of the work of the ministry. (2.) That he be unblamable, holy, and exemplary in his conversation. (3.) That he have a willing mind to give up himself unto the Lord in the work of the ministry. (4.) That he be called and chosen by the suffrage and consent of the church. (5.) That he be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, and imposition of

hands, unto his work and ministry. (1) Eph. iv. 8. 11—13. (2) Titus i. 7—9. 2 Tim. iii. 2—7. (3) 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. (4) Acts xiv. 23. (5) Acts xiii. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 22.

EXPLICATION.

Five things are here said to be required unto the due and solemn constitution of a minister, guide, elder, pastor, or teacher of the church; which as they do not all equally belong unto the essence of the call, so they are all indispensably necessary unto him that would be accounted to have taken that office upon him according to the mind of Christ, and they are plainly expressed in the Scripture.

The first is, That they be furnished with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, for the discharge of the ministry. The communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is the foundation of the ministry, as the apostle declares, Eph. iv. 7, 8. 11—13. 'But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.' And if this were not continued, if the Lord Christ did not continue to give gifts unto men for that end, the ministry must and would cease in the church; and all church-order and administrations thereon. The exercise also of the gifts, is required in all them that are called unto sacred offices. 1 Tim. iv. 14. 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee.' Hence persons destitute of these gifts of the Spirit, as they cannot in a due manner discharge any one duty of the ministry; so, wanting an interest in that which is the foundation of the office, are not esteemed of God as ministers at all, whatever their outward call may be. Hosea iv. 6. 'Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me.'

Secondly, Their unblamableness and holiness of conversation is previously required in them that are to be set *apart* unto the ministry. This the apostle expressly declares,

and lays down many particular instances whereby it is to be tried. Titus i. 7—9. 'For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. 1 Tim. iii. 2—7. 'A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.' Not that the particulars here mentioned by the apostle are only to be considered in the conversation of the person to be called to the ministry, but that in a universal holy conversation these things he requires that he should be eminent in amongst believers, as those which have an especial respect to his work and office. And a failure in any of them, is a just cause or reason to debar any person from obtaining a part and lot in this matter. For whereas the especial end of the ministry, is to promote and further faith and holiness in the church, by the edification of it, how unreasonable a thing would it be if men should be admitted unto the work of it, who in their own persons were strangers both unto faith and holiness. And herein are the elders of the churches seriously to exercise themselves unto God, that they may be an example unto the flock, in a universal labouring after conformity in their lives unto the great bishop and pastor of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, It is required that such a person have a willing mind to give up himself unto God in this work. 1 Pet. v. 1—3. 'The elders which are among you, I exhort: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's

heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.' Willingness and readiness of mind, are the things here required as a previous qualification unto any man's susception of this office; and two things doth the apostle declare to be contrary hereunto.

1. The undertaking of it by constraint, which compriseth every antecedent external impression upon the mind of the undertaker; such are personal outward necessaries, compulsions of friends and relations, want of other ways of subsistance in the world; all which and the like are condemned by the apostle as bring some constraint on the mind, which on other accounts ought to be free and willing; as also all tergiversation and backwardness in persons duly qualified and called, on the consideration of difficulties, temptations, straits, persecutions, is here condemned.

2. An eye and regard unto filthy lucre or profit in the world, is proposed as opposite unto the readiness of mind, which is required in them that are called to this work. An aim in this employment for men by it to advantage themselves in the outward things of this world, without which, it is evident that the whole work and office would lie neglected by the most of them who now would be accounted partakers of it, is openly here condemned by the apostle.

Fourthly, Election by the suffrage and consent of the church is required unto the calling of a pastor or teacher, so that without it formally, or virtually given or obtained, the call, however otherwise carried on or solemnized, is irregular and defective. There are but two places in the New Testament where there is mention of the manner whereby any are called in an ordinary way unto any ministry in the church; and in both of them there is mention of their election by the community of the church; and in both of them the apostles themselves presided with a fulness of church-power, and yet would not deprive the churches of that which was their liberty and privilege. The first of these is Acts vi. where all the apostles together, to give a rule unto the future proceeding of all churches in the constitution of officers amongst them, do appoint the multitude of the disciples or community of the church, to look out from among themselves, or to choose the persons that were

to be set apart thereon unto their office, which they did accordingly: ver. 2, 3. 5. 'Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables; wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom; and the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen,' &c. This was done when only deacons were to be ordained, in whom the interest and concernment of the church is not to be compared with that which it hath in its pastors, teachers, and elders. The same is mentioned again, Acts xiv. 23. where Paul and Barnabas are said to ordain elders in the churches by their election and suffrage. For the word there used will admit of no other sense, however it be ambiguously expressed in our translation. Neither can any instance be given of the use of that word, applied unto the communication of any office or power to any person or persons in an assembly wherein it denoteth any other action but the suffrage of the multitude; and this it doth constantly in all writers in the Greek tongue. And hence it was that this right and privilege of the church, in choosing of those who are to be set over them in the work of the Lord, was a long time preserved inviolate in the primitive churches, as the ancients do abundantly testify. Yea, the show and appearance of it, could never be utterly thrust out of the world, but is still retained in those churches which yet reject the thing itself. And this institution of our Lord Jesus Christ by his apostles, is suited to the nature of the church, and of the authority that he hath appointed to abide therein. For as we have shewed before, persons become a church by their own voluntary consent. Christ makes his subjects willing, not slaves: his rule over them is by his grace in their own wills; and he will have them every way free in their obedience. A church-state is an state of absolute liberty under Christ, not for men to do what they will, but for men to do their duty freely, without compulsion. Now nothing is more contrary to this liberty, than to have their guides, rulers, and overseers impose on them without their consent. Besides, the body of the church is obliged to discharge its duty towards Christ in every institution of his, which herein they cannot, if they

have not their free consent in the choice of their pastors or elders, but are considered as mute persons, or brute creatures. Neither is there any other ordinary way of communicating authority unto any in the church, but by the voluntary submission and subjection of the church itself unto them. For as all other imaginable ways may fail, and have done so, where they have been trusted unto, so they are irrational, and unscriptural, as to their being a means of the delegation of any power whatever.

Fifthly, Unto this election succeeds the solemn setting apart of them that are chosen by the church unto this work and ministry, by fasting, prayer, and imposition of the hands of the presbytery, before constituted in the church wherein any person is so to be set apart.

Quest. 26. May a person be called to, or be employed in, a part only of the office or work of the ministry; or may he hold the relation and exercise the duty of an elder or minister unto more churches than one at the same time?

Ans. Neither of these have either warrant or president in the Scripture; nor is the first of them consistent with the authority of the ministry, nor the latter with the duty thereof, nor either of them with the nature of that relation which is between the elders and the church. Acts xiv. 23. 1 Pet. v. 2. Acts xx. 28.

EXPLICATION.

There are two parts of this question and answer, to be spoken unto severally. The first is concerning a person to be called or employed in any church, in a part only of the office or work of the ministry. As suppose a man should be called or chosen by the church to administer the sacraments, but not to attend to the work of preaching, or unto the rule or guidance of the church; or in like manner unto any other part or parcel of the work of the ministry, with an exemption of other duties from his charge or care. If this be done by consent and agreement, for any time or season, it is unwarrantable and disorderly (what may be done occasionally upon an emergency, or in case of weakness or disability befalling any elder as to the discharge of any part of his duty, is not here inquired after). For,

First, If the person so called or employed have received

gifts fitting him for the whole work of the ministry, the exercise of them is not to be restrained by any consent or agreement; seeing they are given for the edification of the church to be traded withal. 1 Cor. xii. 7. 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal;' and this he which hath received such gifts, is bound to attend unto and pursue.

Secondly, If he have not received such gifts as completely to enable him unto the discharge of the whole work of the ministry in the church wherein he is to administer, it is not lawful for the church to call him unto that work wherein the Lord Christ hath not gone before them in qualifying him for it. Yea, to do so, would be most irregular, for the whole power of the church consists in its attendance unto the rule given unto it. And therefore the office and work of the ministry being constituted by the law of Christ, it is not in the power of the church to enlarge or straiten the power or duty of any one that is called unto the office thereof. Neither can or ought any person that is called unto the work of the ministry to give his consent to the restraint of the exercise of that gift that he hath received, in a due and orderly manner, nor to the abridgment of the authority which the Lord Christ hath committed unto the ministers of the gospel.

As it is incumbent upon them to take care to preserve their whole authority, and to discharge their whole duty, so that arbitrary constitutions of this nature are irregular, and would bring in confusion into churches.

The second part of the question is, concerning the relation of the same person to more churches than one at the same time, and his undertaking to discharge the duty of his relation unto them, as an elder or minister. And this also is irregular and unwarrantable. Now a man may hold the relation of an elder, pastor, or minister unto more churches than one, two ways; 1. Formally and directly, by an equal formal interest in them, undertaking the pastoral charge equally and alike of them, being called alike to them and accepting of such a relation. 2. Virtually; when by virtue of his relation unto one church, he puts forth his power or authority in ministerial acts in or towards another. The first way is unlawful, and destructive both of the office and

duty of a pastor. For as elders are ordained in and unto the churches respectively that they are to take care of, Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5. and their office-power consists in a relation unto the church that they are set over, so they are commanded to attend unto the service of the churches wherein, and whereunto, they are so ordained; Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 2. and that with all diligence, care, and watchfulness, as those that must give an account, Heb. xiii. 17. which no man is able to do towards more churches than one, the same duty being at all times to be performed towards all. And because the whole authority of the elders, pastors, or bishops of churches, is ministerial, 1 Cor. iv. 1. consisting in a power of acting upon the command of Christ, they are bound in their own persons to the discharge of their duty and office, without the least pretence of authority to delegate another, or others, to act their part, or to do their duty, which would be an effect of autocratorical authority, and not of obedience or ministry. The latter way also of relation unto many churches is unwarrantable; for, 1. It hath no warrant in the Scripture; no law nor constitution of Christ, or his apostles, can be produced to give it countenance; but elders were ordained to their own churches, and commanded to attend unto them. 2. No rule is given unto any elders how they should behave themselves in reference unto more churches than one, in the exercise of their ministerial power, as there are rules given unto every one for the discharge of that duty in the church whereunto he is related. 3. There is no example to give it countenance recorded in the Scripture. 4. The authority to be put forth hath no foundation. (1.) Not in the gifts they have received; for the ministerial power is not an absolute ability or faculty of doing what a man is able, but a right, whereby a man hath power to do that rightly and lawfully, which before he could not do. This, gifts will not give to any; for if they did, they would do it to all that have received them. (2.) Not in their election; for they are chosen in and by that church whereunto they stand in especial relation, whose choice cannot give ministerial power over any but themselves. (3.) Not in their setting apart by fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands; for this is only unto that office, work, and power, whereunto they are chosen. They are not chosen for one end, and set apart for

mother. (4.) Not from the communion of churches, for that gives no new power, but only a due exercise of that which was before received.

Quest. 27. What are the principal duties of the pastors or teachers of the church?

Ans. (1.) To be examples unto the flock in faith, love, knowledge, meekness, patience, readiness to suffer for the name and gospel of Christ, with constancy therein. (2.) To watch for the souls, and take care of all the spiritual concernments of the whole flock committed to them. (3.) To preach the word diligently, dividing it aright. (4.) To preserve and contend for the truth. (5.) To administer all the ordinances of the gospel duly and orderly. (6.) To stir up and exercise the gifts they have received in the discharge of their whole work, and administration of all ordinances. (7.) To instruct, admonish, cherish, and comfort, all the members of the church as their conditions, occasions, and necessities do require. (8.) To attend with diligence, skill, and wisdom, unto the discharge of that authority which in the rule of the church is committed unto them. (1) 1 Tim. iii. 10, 11. 3. iv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 3. Col. i. 24. Phil. ii. 17. iii. 17. (2) Heb. xiii. 17. Acts xx. 28. (3) 2 Tim. ii. 15. iv. 2. Rom. xii. 6—8. (4) 1 Tim. vi. 20. Acts xx. 28. Jude 3. (5) 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. 1 Tim. iii. 15. (6) 1 Tim. iv. 14—16. (7) Acts xx. 18—20. 25, 26. 1 Thess. iii. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. (8) Rom. xii. 8. 1 Tim. v. 17.

The answer is full and plain.

Quest. 28. Wherein principally doth the authority of the elders of the church consist?

Ans. (1.) In that the rule of the church and the guidance thereof in things appertaining unto the worship of God, is committed unto them. And therefore, (2.) Whatever they do as elders in the church according unto rule, they do it not in the name or authority of the church by which their power is derived unto them, nor as members only of the church by their own consent or covenant, but in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, from whom, by virtue of his law and ordinance, their ministerial office and power is received. So that, (3.) In the exercise of any act of church power, by and with the consent of the church, there is an obligation, thence proceeding, which ariseth immediately from that authority

which they have received of Jesus Christ, which is the spring of all rule and authority in the church. (1) Acts xx. 28. Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 1 Pet. v. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 28. (2) 1 Tim. iii. 5. Col. iv. 17. 2 Cor. x. 4. 8. (3) 1 Tim. iv. 11. Titus ii. 15. 1 Pet. i. 2—5.

EXPLICATION.

The answer unto this question explains the power or authority of the elders of the church, from whom they do receive it, and how it is exercised by them; the right stating whereof is of great importance in the whole discipline of the church, and must therefore here be farther explained. To this end we may consider,

First, That all church power is originally vested in Jesus Christ the sole head and monarch thereof. God the Father hath committed it unto him, and intrusted him with it for the accomplishment of his work of mediation. Matt. xxviii. 18.

Secondly, That he doth communicate of this authority by way of trust, to be exercised by them in his name, unto persons by him appointed, so much as is needful for the ordering and disposing of all things in his churches, unto the blessed ends for which he hath instituted and appointed them. For no man can have any power in his church for any end whatever, but by delegation from him. What is not received from him is mere usurpation. And whoever takes upon himself the exercise of any rule, or authority, or power in the church, not granted unto them by him, or not rightly derived from him, is an oppressor, a thief, and a robber; this necessarily follows upon the absolute investiture of all power in him alone. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Thirdly, The means whereby the Lord Christ communicates this power unto men, is by his law and constitution, whereby he hath granted, ordained, and appointed, that such and such powers shall be exercised in his church, and that by such and such persons, to be derived unto them in such a way and manner; so that the word of the gospel, or the laws and constitutions of the Lord Christ therein are the first recipient seat and subject morally of all church power whatever. Matt. xvi. 19. xviii. 18—20.

Fourthly, The way and means whereby any persons come

to a participation of this power regularly, according to the mind of Christ, is by the obedience unto, and due observation of, his laws and commands, in them unto whom they are prescribed. As when an office, with the power of it, is constituted and limited by the law of the land, there is no more required to invest any man in that office, or to give him that power, than the due observance of the means and way prescribed in the law to that end. The way, then, whereby the elders of the church do come to participate of the power and authority which Christ hath appointed to be exercised in his church, is by their and the church's due observance of the rules and laws given by him for their election, and setting apart unto that office. Heb. iv. 3. Acts xiv. 24.

Fifthly, On this account they receive their power from Christ himself alone, and that immediately; for the means used for their participation of it, are not recipient of the power itself formally, nor do authoritatively collate or confer it, only the laws of Christ are executed in a way of obedience. So that though they are chosen and set apart to their office by the church, yet they are made overseers by the Holy Ghost; Acts xx. 28. Though they have their power by the church, yet they have it not from the church; nor was that power whereof they are made partakers (as was said) formally resident in the body of the church, before their participation of it; but really in Christ himself alone, and morally in his word or law. And thence is the rule and guidance of the church committed unto them by Christ. Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 1 Pet. v. 2. 1 Tim. iii. 5.

Sixthly, This authority and power thus received from Christ, is that which they exert and put forth in all their ministerial administrations, in all which they do as ministers in the house of God, either in his worship, or in the rule of the church itself. They exercise that authority of Christ, which he hath in his law appointed to be exercised in his church; and from that authority is due order given unto the administration of all the ordinances of worship; and an obligation unto obedience to acts of rule doth thence also ensue; so that they which despise them, despise the authority of Christ.

Seventhly, When as elders they do, or declare any thing,

in the name of the church, they do not, as such, put forth any authority committed unto them from and by the church, but only declare the consent and determination of the church in the exercise of their own liberty and privilege; but the authority which they act by, and which they put forth, is that which is committed to themselves, as such, by Jesus Christ.

Eighthly, This authority is comprised in the law and constitution of Christ which themselves exert only ministerially; and therefore, whenever they act any thing authoritatively, which they are not enabled for, or warranted in, by the word of the gospel, or do any thing without or contrary unto rule, all such actings as to any spiritual effect of the gospel, or obligation on the consciences of men, are 'ipso facto' null, and are no way ratified in heaven, where all their orderly actings are made valid; that is, by Christ himself in his word.

Ninthly, The reason therefore why the consent of the church is required unto the authoritative acting of the elders therein, is not because from thence any authority doth accrue unto them anew, which virtually and radically they had not before; but because by the rule of the gospel this is required to the orderly acting of their power, which without it would be contrary to rule, and therefore ineffectual; as also it must needs be from the nature of the thing itself; for no act can take place in the church without or against its own consent, whilst its obedience is voluntary and of choice.

But if it be asked, What then shall the elders do, in case the church refuse to consent unto such acts as are indeed according to rule, and warranted by the institution of Christ? it is answered, That they are first diligently to instruct them from the word in their duty, making known the mind of Christ unto them in the matter under consideration. 2. To declare unto them the danger of their dissent in obstructing the edification of the body to the dishonour of the Lord Christ, and their own spiritual disadvantage. 3. To wait patiently for the concurrence of the grace of God with their ministry, in giving light and obedience unto the church. And, 4. In case of the church's continuance in any failure of duty, to seek for advice and counsel from the elders and brethren of other churches, all which particulars

might be enlarged, would the nature of our present design and work permit it.

Quest. 29. What is the duty of the church towards their elders, pastors, or teachers?

Ans. (1.) To have them in reverence and honour for their office and work's sake. (2.) To obey them conscientiously in all things wherein they speak unto them in the name of the Lord. (3.) To pray earnestly for them, that they may, and to exhort them, if need require, to fulfil the work of the ministry. (4.) To communicate unto them of their temporals for their comfortable subsistence in the world, and usefulness unto others. (5.) Wisely to order things by their direction, so as that they may be amongst them without fear. (6.) To abide with, and stand by them, in their sufferings for the gospel, and service of Christ among them. (1) 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 1 Tim. v. 17. (2) Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Cor. xvi. 16. (3) Eph. vi. 18, 19. Col. iv. 3. 2 Thess. iii. 1. Col. iv. 17. (4) Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix. 14. (5) 1 Cor. xvi. 10. (6) 2 Tim. i. 16—18. iv. 16.

Quest. 30. Are there any differences in the office, or offices, of the guides, rulers, elders, or ministers of the church?

Ans. The office of them that are teachers, is one and the same among them all; but where there are many in the same church, it is the will of Christ that they should be peculiarly assigned unto such especial work in the discharge of their office-power, as their gifts received from him do peculiarly fit them for, and the necessities of the church require. Rom. xii. 4—8. 1 Cor. viii. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 10. v. 2.

EXPLICATION.

The office of them that are to instruct the church in the name and authority of Christ, is one and the same, as hath been shewed before. And there are many names that are equally accommodated unto all that are partakers of it, as elders, bishops, guides; they are all alike elders, alike bishops, alike guides, have the one office in common amongst them, and every one the whole entire unto himself. But there are names also given unto them, whereby they are distinguished, not as to office, but as to their work and employment in the discharge of that office: such are

'pastors and teachers,' Eph. iv. 11. which are placed as distinct persons in their work, partakers of the same office. Now the foundation of this distinction and difference lies,

First, In the different gifts that they have received; for although it be required in them all, that they have received all those gifts, abilities, and qualifications which are necessary for the work of the ministry, yet as to the degrees of their participation of their gifts, some may more excel in one, others in another. 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit,' &c. and all these gifts are bestowed upon them to be exercised and laid out, for the profit and benefit of the church: ver. 7. 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.' And therefore every one is in an especial manner to attend unto the exercise and use of that gift wherein he doth excel; or which tends most to the edification of the church; every man being to minister according as he hath received. 1 Pet. iv. 10.

Secondly, It lies in the nature of the work of the ministry in the church, which in general may be referred unto two heads or ends.

1. The instruction of it in the knowledge of God in Christ, and the mysteries of the gospel, that it might grow in grace, wisdom, saving light, and knowledge.

2. The exhortation of it to walk answerable unto light received, in holiness and universal obedience. Now though these several ends of the ministry cannot be divided or separated, yet they may be distinguished, and so carried on distinctly, that in the one, knowledge or light may be firstly and principally intended, so as to lead unto obedience; in the other, holiness may be firstly designed, as springing from gospel light or knowledge. Hence therefore are the elders of the church, principally to attend unto that work, or that end of the ministry, which by the Holy Ghost they are most suited unto. And therefore the church following the intimations of the Holy Ghost, in communicating his gifts in variety as he pleaseth, and attending their own edi-

ication, may and ought amongst those whom they choose o the office of elders or ministers, withal design them in articular unto that especial work which they are especially itted and prepared for; and this upon their being chosen nd set apart, they are accordingly to attend unto. 'He that eacheth on teaching, he that exhorteth on exhortation;' om. xii. 7, 8. Their office then is the same, but their aching, work, and employment on the grounds mentioned, istinct and different.

Quest. 31. Are there appointed any elders in the church, hose office and duty consist in rule and government only?

Ans. Elders not called to teach ordinarily, or administer he sacraments, but to assist and help in the rule and overnment of the church, are mentioned in the Scripture. om. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17.

EXPLICATION.

This office of ruling elders in the church, is much opposed by some, and in especial by them who have least eason so to do. For first, They object against them, that hey are lay-elders; when those with whom they have to o deny that distinction of the church into the clergy nd laity. For although they allow the distribution of it nto officers, and the multitude of the brethren, yet they aintain that the whole church is God's clergy, his law, nd portion; 1 Pet. v. 3. Again, they affirm them to be lders, and therein not merely of the members of the church, ut officers set apart unto their office according to rule, or he appointment of Christ. And if by laity, the people istinct from the officers of the church are to be underood, the very term of a lay-elder implies a contradiction, s designing one, who is, and is not, a church officer. Beides, themselves do principally govern the church by such hom they esteem laymen, as not in holy orders; to whom he principal part of its rule, at least in the execution of it s committed, which renders their objection to this sort of hurch officers unreasonable. Others also have given adantage by making this office annual or biennial, in them hat are chosen unto it; which though they plead the neessity of their churches for, as not having persons meet for his work and duty, who are willing to undertake it, con-

stantly during their lives, without such a contribution for their maintenance as they are not able to afford; yet the wisest of them do acknowledge an irregularity in what they do, and wish it remedied. But this hinders not, but that such church officers are indeed designed in the Scripture, and of whom frequent mention is made in the ancient writers, and footsteps also yet remain in most churches of their institution, though wofully corrupted. For besides, that some light in this matter may be taken from the church of the Jews, wherein the elders of the people were joined in rule with the priests, both in the sanhedrim, and all lesser assemblies, there is in the gospel express mention of persons that were assigned peculiarly for rule and government in the church; as 1 Cor. xii. 28. And it is in vain pretended that those words, 'helps, governments,' do denote gifts only, seeing the apostle expressly enumerates the persons in office, or officers, which the Lord Christ then used in the foundation and rule of the churches as then planted. He that ruleth, also is distinguished from him that teacheth, and him that exhorteth, Rom. xii. 8. and is prescribed diligence, as his principal qualification in the discharge of his duty. And the words of the apostle to this purpose, are express, 1 Tim. v. 17. 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.' For the words expressly assign two sorts of elders, whereof some only attend unto rule; others moreover labour in the word and doctrine. Neither doth that word, as some would have it, 'labour in the word,' intend any other labour but what is incumbent on all the pastors and teachers of their church as their constant duty. See Rom. vi. 12. Acts xx. 35. 1 Thess. v. 12. Now can we suppose that the apostle would affirm them to be worthy of double honour, whom comparing with others, he notes as remiss and negligent in their work? For it seems that others were more diligent in the discharge of that duty, which was no less theirs, if only one sort of elders be here intended. The Scripture is not wont to commend such persons as worthy of double honour, but rather to propose them as meet for double shame and punishment. Jer. xlviii. 10. 1 Cor. ix. 16. And they are unmindful of their own interest, who would have bishops that attend to the

rule of the church, to be distinctly intended by the elders that rule well; seeing the apostle expressly preferreth before and above them, those that attend constantly to the word and doctrine. And besides what is thus expressly spoken concerning the appointment of this sort of elders in the church, their usefulness in the necessity of their work and employment is evident. For whereas a constant care in the church, that the conversation of all the members of it be such as becometh the gospel, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be not evil spoken of, is of great concernment and importance, and the pastors and teachers being to give up themselves continually unto prayer and the ministry of of the word, cannot attend unto the constant and daily oversight thereof; the usefulness of these elders, whose proper and peculiar work it is to have regard unto the holy walking of the church, must needs be manifest unto all. But whereas in most churches there is little or no regard unto the personal holiness of the members of them, it is no wonder that no account should be had of them who are ordained by the Lord Christ to look after it and promote it.

The qualification of these elders, with the way of their call and setting apart unto their office, being the same with those of the teaching elders before insisted on, need not be here again repeated. Their authority also in the whole rule of the church is every way the same with that of the other sort of elders, and they are to act in the execution of it with equal respect and regard from the church. Yea, the business of rule being peculiarly committed unto them, and they required to attend thereunto, with diligence in an especial manner, the work thereof is principally theirs, as that of labouring in the word and doctrine doth especially belong unto the pastors and teachers of the churches. And this institution is abused, when either unmeet persons are called to this office, or those that are called, do not attend unto their duty with diligence, or do act only in it by the guidance of the teaching officers, without a sense of their own authority, or due respect from the church.

Quest. 32. Is there no other ordinary office in the church but only that of elders?

Ans. Yes, of deacons also.

Quest. 33. What are the deacons of the church?

Ans. Approved men chosen by the church to take care for the necessities of the poor belonging thereunto, and other outward occasions of the whole church, by the collection, keeping, and distribution of the alms and other supplies of the church, set apart and commended to the grace of God therein, by prayer. Acts vi. 3. 5, 6. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 8—13.

EXPLICATION.

The office of the deacon, the nature, end, and use of it, the qualification of the persons to be admitted unto it, the way and manner of their election and setting apart, are all of them plainly expressed in the Scripture. Acts vi. 1—3. 5, 6. 'There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen,' &c. 'whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.' 1 Tim. iii. 8—13. 'Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless; the husbands of one wife, ruling their children, and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus.' These things are thus plain and express in the Scripture. But whereas many have grown weary of the observation of the institutions of the gospel, this office hath for a long time been lost amongst the most of Christians. By some the name is retained, but applied to another work, duty, and employment, than this to which it is peculiarly appropriated in the Scripture. Their proper and original work of taking care for the poor, they say, is provided for by others; and therefore that office *being* needless, another, unto another purpose, under the

ame name, is erected. Such are deacons that may read service, preach, and baptize, when they have license thereunto. But this choice, to reject an office of the appointment of Christ, under pretence of provision made for the duties of it another way, and the erecting of one not appointed by him, seems not equal. But whereas it is our duty in all things to have regard to the authority of Christ and his appointments in the gospel, if we claim the privilege of being called after his name, some think that if what he hath appointed may be colourably performed another way without respect unto his institutions, that is far the best. But omitting the practice of other men, the things that concern this office in the church are, as was said, clear in the Scripture.

First, The persons called unto it are to be of honest report, furnished with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially with wisdom, Acts vi. 3. and those other endowments useful in the discharge of their duty mentioned, 1 Tim. iii. 8.

Secondly, The way whereby they come to be made partakers of this office, is by the choice or election of the church, Acts vi. 2, 3. 5. whereupon they are solemnly to be set apart by prayer.

Thirdly, Their work or duty consists in a daily ministration unto the necessities of the poor saints, or members of the church; ver. 1, 2.

Fourthly, To this end that they may be enabled so to do, it is ordained, that every first day the members of the church do contribute according as God enables them of their substance for the supply of the wants of the poor; 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And also occasionally as necessity shall require, or God move their hearts by his grace.

Fifthly, Hereunto is to be added whatever by the providence of God may be conferred upon the church for its outward advantage, with reference unto the end mentioned, Acts iv. 34, 35.

Sixthly, These supplies of the church being committed to the care and charge of the deacons, they are from thence to minister with diligence and wisdom unto the necessities of the poor; that so the needy may be supplied, that there may be none that lack, the rich may contribute of their riches according to the mind of Christ, and in obedience unto his

command, that they which minister well in this office may purchase to themselves a good degree, and boldness in the faith, and that in all the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified with praise and thanksgiving.

It belongs therefore unto persons called unto this office,

First, To acquaint themselves with the outward condition of those that appear to be poor and needy in the church, whether by the addresses of such poor ones who are bound to make known their wants, occasions, and necessities unto them, or by the information of others, or their own observation.

Secondly, To acquaint the elders and the church as occasion requireth, with the necessities of the poor under their care, that those who are able may be stirred up by the elders to a free supply and contribution.

Thirdly, To dispose what they are intrusted with faithfully, cheerfully, tenderly, without partiality, or preferring one before another, for any outward respect whatever.

Fourthly, To keep and give an account unto the church when called for, of what they have received, and how they have disposed of it, that so they may be known to have well discharged their office; that is, with care, wisdom, and tenderness, whereby they procure to themselves a good degree with boldness in the faith, and the church is encouraged to intrust them farther with this sacrifice of their alms, which is so acceptable unto God.

Quest. 24. Wherein consists the general duty of the whole church, and every member thereof, in their proper station and condition?

Ans. In performing, doing, and keeping inviolate all the commands and institutions of Jesus Christ, walking unblamably and fruitfully in the world, holding forth the word of truth, and glorifying the Lord Christ in and by the profession of his name, and keeping his testimony unto the end. Matt. xxviii. 20. Acts ii. 42. Phil. ii. 15, 16. iv. 8, 9. 1 Thess. iii. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 10—14. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Heb. x. 23.

EXPLICATION.

Besides the general duties of Christianity incumbent on all believers, or disciples of Christ, as such, there are sundry *especial* duties required of them as gathered into church

societies, upon the account of an especial trust committed unto them in that state and condition. For,

First, The church being appointed as the seat and subject of all the institutions of Christ, and ordinances of gospel worship, it is its duty, that is, of the whole body and every member in his proper place, to use all care, watchfulness, and diligence, that all the commands of Christ be kept inviolate, and all his institutions observed according to his mind and will. Thus those added to the church, Acts ii. 42. together with the whole church, 'continued steadfastly' (which argues care, circumspection, and diligence) 'in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayers;' which principal duties are enumerated to express their respect towards all. This is their 'standing fast in the Lord,' which was a matter of such joy to the apostle when he found it in the Thessalonians, 1 Epist. iii. 8. 'For now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.' That order and steadfastness which he rejoiced over in the Colossians, chap. ii. 5. 'For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.' And where this duty is despised, men contenting themselves with what is done by others, there is a great neglect of that faithfulness in obedience which the church owes unto Jesus Christ.

Secondly, The glory of the Lord Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel to be manifested in and by the power of a holy exemplary conversation, is committed unto the church and all the members of it. This is one end wherefore the Lord Christ calls them out of the world, separates them to be a peculiar people unto himself, brings them forth unto a visible profession, and puts his name upon them, namely, that in their walking and conversation he may shew forth the holiness of his doctrine, and power of his Spirit, grace, and example, to effect in them all holiness, godliness, righteousness, and honesty in the world. Hence are they earnestly exhorted unto these things, Phil. iv. 8, 9. 'Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things:' and that to this end, that the doctrine of the gospel

may be adorned, and Christ glorified in all things; Tit. ii. 10. And those who fail herein are said to be 'enemies of the cross of Christ,' Phil. iii. 18. as hindering the progress of the doctrine thereof, by rendering it undesirable in their conversation. This also, therefore, even the duty of universal holiness, with an especial regard unto the honour of Christ and the gospel which they are called and designed to testify and express in the world, is incumbent on the church, and every member of it, namely, as the apostle speaks, 'that they be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they are to shine as lights in the world;' Phil. ii. 15.

Thirdly, The care of declaring and manifesting the truth is also committed unto them. Christ hath made the church to be the 'pillar and ground of truth,' 1 Tim. iii. 15. where the truth of the gospel is so firmly seated, founded, fixed, established, and then lifted up in the ways of Christ's appointment to be seen, discerned, and known by others. And as this is done principally in the preaching of the gospel by the elders of the church, and in their contending for the truth 'once delivered unto the saints,' Jude 3. so it is also the duty of the whole church to 'hold forth the word of life,' Phil. ii. 16. by ministering of the gift that every man hath received, 1 Pet. iv. 10. in the way of Christ's appointment. In these, and the like instances, doth our Lord Jesus Christ require of his church that they express in the world their subjection unto him and his authority; and that they abide therein unto the end against all opposition whatever.

The sinful neglect of churches in the discharge of their duty herein, was one great means of that apostacy from the rule of the gospel which they generally of old fell into. When the members of them began to think that they had no advantage by their state and condition, but only the outward participation of some ordinance of worship, and no duty incumbent on them but only to attend and follow the motions and actings of their guides, the whole societies quickly became corrupt, and fit to be disposed of according to the carnal interest of those that had by their neglect and sin, gotten dominion over them. And at all times, as the people were negligent in their duty, the leaders of them were *apt to* usurp undue authority. When the one sort will not

do that which they ought, the other are ready to take upon them what they ought not. It is a circumspect performance of duty on all hands alone, that will keep all sorts of persons in the church within those bounds and limits, and up to those rights and privileges, which Christ hath allotted and granted unto them. And herein alone doth the order, honour, and beauty of the church consist. Church members, therefore, are to search and inquire after the particular duties which, as such, are incumbent on them; as also to consider what influence their special state and condition, as they are church members, ought to have into all the duties of their obedience as they are Christians. For this privilege is granted unto them for their edification, that is, their furtherance in their whole course of walking before God. And this be neglected, if they content themselves with a name to live in this or that church, to partake of the ordinances that are stated and solemnly administered only, that which would have been to their advantage, may prove to be a snare and temptation unto them. What these especial duties are in the particular instances of them, is of too large a consideration here to be insisted on. Besides, it is the great duty of the guides of the church to be inculcating of them into the minds of those committed to their charge. For the church's due performance of its duty is their honour, crown, and reward.

Quest. 35. Whence do you reckon prayer, which is a part of moral and natural worship, among the institutions of Christ in his church?

Ans. On many accounts; as, (1.) Because the Lord Christ hath commanded his church to attend unto the worship of God therein. (2.) Because he bestows on the ministers of the church gifts and ability of prayer for the benefit and edification thereof. (3.) He hath appointed that all his other ordinances should be administered with prayer, whereby it becomes a part of them. (4.) Because himself ministers in the holy place, as the great high-priest of his church, to present their prayers unto God at the throne of grace. (5.) Because in all the prayers of the church there is an especial regard had unto himself, and the whole work of his mediation. (1) Luke xviii. 1. xxi. 36. Rom. xii. 5. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. (2) Eph. iv. 8. 12, 13. Rom. viii. 15, 16. Gal. iv. 6. (3) Acts

ii. 42. 1 Tim. iv. 5. (4) Rev. viii. 3, 4. Heb. iv. 14—16. vi. 20. x. 20—22. (5) John xiv. 13. xv. 16. 22. 26. Eph. iii. 14, 15.

Quest. 36. May not the church in the solemn worship of God, and celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, make use of, and content itself in the use of forms of prayer in an unknown tongue composed by others, and prescribed unto them?

Ans. So to do would be, (1.) Contrary to one principal end of prayer itself, which is, that believers may therein apply themselves to the throne of grace for spiritual supplies according to the present condition, wants, and exigencies of their souls. (2.) To the main end that the Lord Jesus Christ aimed at in supplying men with gifts for the discharge of the work of the ministry, tending to render the promise of sending the Holy Ghost, which is the immediate cause of the church's preservation and continuance, needless and useless. Moreover, (3) It will render the discharge of the duty of ministers unto several precepts and exhortations of the gospel, for the use, stirring up, and exercise of their gifts, impossible. And, (4.) Thereby hinder the edification of the church, the great end of all ordinances and institutions. (1) Rom. viii. 26. Phil. iv. 6. Heb. iv. 16. 1 Pet. iv. 7. (2) Eph. iv. 8. 12, 13. (3) 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6, 7. Col. iv. 17. Matt. xxv. 14—16. (4) 1 Cor. xii. 7.

Quest. 37. Is the constant work of preaching the gospel by the elders of the church necessary?

Ans. It is so, both on the part of the elders or ministers themselves, of whom that duty is strictly required, and who principally therein labour and watch for the good of the flock; and on the part of the church, for the furtherance of their faith and obedience, by instruction, reproof, exhortation, and consolation. Matt. xxiv. 45—51. Rom. xii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. ix. 17, 18. Eph. iv. 12, 13. 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. v. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. iii. 14—17. iv. 2.

Quest. 38. Who are the proper subjects of baptism?

Ans. Professing believers, if not baptized in their infancy, and their infant seed. Matt. xxviii. 19. Acts ii. 38, 39. xvi. 33. 1 Cor. i. 16. vii. 14. Col. ii. 12, 13. with Gen. xvii. 10—12.

Quest. 39. Where, and to whom, is the ordinance of the Lord's supper to be administered?

Ans. In the church, or assembly of the congregation, to all the members of it, rightly prepared, and duly assembled, or to such of them as are so assembled. 1 Cor. xi. 20—22. 28, 29. 33. Acts ii. 46.

Quest. 40. How often is that ordinance to be administered?

Ans. Every first day of the week, or at least as often as opportunity and conveniency may be obtained. 1 Cor. xi. 26. Acts xx. 7.

Quest. 41. What is the discipline of the church?

Ans. It consists in the due exercise of that authority and power which the Lord Christ in and by his word hath granted unto the church, for its continuance, increase, and preservation in purity, order, and holiness, according to his appointment. Matt. xvi. 19. Rom. xii. 8. 2 Cor. x. 4—6. Rev. ii. 2. 20.

EXPLICATION.

Sundry things are to be considered about this discipline of the church. As,

First, The foundation of it, which is a grant of power and authority made unto it by Jesus Christ, as mediator, head, king, and lawgiver of his church. For all discipline being an act of power, and this being exercised in and about things internal and spiritual, no men can of themselves, or by grant of any others, have any right or authority to or in the exercise thereof. Whoever hath any interest herein, or right hereunto, it must be granted unto him from above, by Jesus Christ, and that as mediator and head of his church. For as all church power is in an especial manner by the authority and grant of the Father vested in him alone, Matt. xxviii. 18. Eph. i. 20—23. so the nature of it, which is spiritual; the object of it, which are the consciences and gospel privileges of believers; with the ends of it, namely, the glory of God in Christ, with the spiritual and eternal good of the souls of men; do all manifest that it can have no other right nor foundation. This in the first place is to be fixed, that no authority can be exercised in the church, but what is derived from Jesus Christ, as was spoken before.

Secondly, The means whereby the Lord Christ doth communicate this power and authority unto his church, is his word or his law and constitution concerning it in the

gospel; so that it is exactly limited and bounded thereby. And no power or authority can be exercised in the church, but what is granted and conveyed unto it by the word; seeing that Christ communicates no power or authority any other ways. Whatever of that nature is beside it, or beyond it, is mere usurpation, and null in its exercise. Herein is the commission of the guides and rules of the church expressed, which they are not to exceed in any thing. Herein are bounds and limits fixed to the actings of the whole church, and of every part and member of it.

Thirdly, This power or authority, thus granted and conveyed by Jesus Christ, is to be exercised as to the manner of the administration of discipline, with skill and diligence, Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. and the skill required hereunto, is a gift, or an ability of mind bestowed by the Holy Ghost upon men to put in execution the laws of Christ, for the government of the church, in the way and order by him appointed; or a spiritual wisdom whereby men know how to behave themselves in the house of God, in their several places, for its due edification in faith and love; 1 Tim. iii. 15. And this ability of mind to make a due application of the laws of the gospel unto persons, times, and actions, with their circumstances, is such a gift of the Holy Ghost, as whereof there are several degrees answering to the distinct duties that are incumbent on the rulers of the church on the one hand, and members on the other. And where this skill and wisdom is wanting, there it is impossible that the discipline of the church should be preserved or carried on. Hereunto also diligence and watchfulness are to be added, without which ability and power will never obtain their proper end in a due manner; Rom. xii. 6—8.

Fourthly, The end of this discipline is continuance, increase, and preservation of the church, according to the rule of its first institution; 1 Cor. v. 7. This power hath Christ given his church for its conservation, without which it must necessarily decay, and come to nothing. Nor is it to be imagined that where any church is called and gathered according to the mind of Christ, that he hath left it destitute of power and authority to preserve itself, in that state and order which he hath appointed unto it. And that which

was one principal cause of the decays of the Asian churches, was the neglect of this dicipline, the power and privilege whereof, the Lord hath left unto them and intrusted them withal, for their own preservation in order, purity, and holiness. And therefore for the neglect thereof they were greatly blamed by him, Rev. ii. 14, 15. 20. iii. 2. as is also the church of Corinth by the apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 2. as they are commended who attended unto the diligent exercise of it, Rev. ii. 2. iii. 9. The disuse also of it, hath been the occasion of all the defilements, abominations, and confusions, that have spread themselves over many churches in the world.

Quest. 42. Unto whom is the power and administration of this discipline committed by Jesus Christ?

Ans. As to the authority to be exerted in it in the things wherein the whole church is concerned, unto the elders; as unto trial, judgment, and consent in and unto its exercise unto the whole brotherhood; as unto love, care, and watchfulness in private and particular cases, to every member of the church. Matt. xxiv. 45. Eph. iv. 13, 14. Acts xx. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 5. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 2. 1 Thess. v. 12. Gal. vi. 1, 2. 1 Cor. iv. 14. v. 2. 4, 5. 2 Cor. ii. 6—8. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

EXPLICATION.

It hath been shewed that this power is granted unto the church by virtue of the law and constitution of Christ. Now this law assigns the means and way whereby any persons do obtain an interest therein; and makes the just allotments to all concerned in it. What this law, constitution, or word of Christ assigns unto any, as such, that they are the first seat and subject of, by what way or means soever they come to be intrusted therein. Thus that power or authority which is given unto the elders of the church, doth not first formally reside in the body of the church unorganized or distinct from them, though they are called unto their office by their suffrage and choice; but they are themselves, as such, the first subject of office-power; for so is the will of the Lord Christ. Nor is the interest of the whole church in this power of discipline whatever it be,

given unto it by the elders, but is immediately granted unto it, by the will and law of the Lord Jesus.

First, In this way and manner the authority above described, is given in the first place, as such, unto the elders of the church. This authority was before explained, in answer unto the 28th question, as also was the way whereby they receive it. And it is that power of office whereby they are enabled for the discharge of their whole duty, in the teaching and ruling of the church; called the 'power of the keys,' from Matt. xvi. 19. Which expression being metaphorical, and in general liable unto many interpretations, is to be understood according to the declaration made of it in those particular instances wherein it is expressed. Nor is it a two-fold power or authority that the elders of the church have committed unto them; one to teach and another to rule, commonly called the power of order and of jurisdiction; but it is one power of office, the duties whereof are of several kinds, referred unto the two general heads, first of teaching by preaching the word and celebration of the sacrament, and secondly, of rule or government. By virtue hereof, are they made rulers over the house of God, Matt. xxiv. 45. stewards in his house, 1 Cor. iv. 1. overseers of the church, Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2. guides unto the church, Heb. xiii. 7. 17. Not that they have a supreme or autocratorical power committed unto them, to enable them to do what seems right and good in their own eyes, seeing they are expressly bound up unto the terms of their commission, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. 'to teach men to do and observe all, and only what Christ hath commanded;' nor have they by virtue of it, any dominion in or over the church; that is, the laws, rules, or privileges of it, or the consciences of the disciples of Christ, to alter, change, add, diminish, or bind by their own authority; 1 Pet. v. 3. Mark x. 42—44. But it is a power merely ministerial, in whose exercise they are unto the Lord Christ accountable servants, Heb. xiii. 17. Matt. xxiv. 45. and servants of the church for Jesus's sake; 2 Cor. iv. 5. This authority in the discipline of the church they exert and put forth by virtue of their office; and not either as declaring of the power of the church itself, or acting what is delegated unto them

thereby, but as ministerially exercising the authority of Christ committed unto them.

Secondly, The body of the church, or the multitude of the brethren, (women being excepted by especial prohibition, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.) is by the law and constitution of Christ in the gospel, interested in the administration of this power of discipline in the church, so far as,

1. To consider, try, and make a judgment, in and about all persons, things, and causes, in reference whereunto it is to be exercised. Thus the brethren at Jerusalem joined in the consideration of the observation of Mosaical ceremonies with the apostles and elders, Acts xv. 23. And the multitude of them to whom letters were sent about it, likewise did the same, ver. 30—32. And this they thought it their duty and concernment to do, chap. xxi. xxii. And they are blamed, who applied not themselves unto this duty, 1 Cor. v. 4—6. Thence are the epistles of Paul to the churches to instruct them in their duties and privileges in Christ, and how they ought to behave themselves in the ordering of all things amongst them according to his mind. And these are directed unto the churches themselves, either jointly with their elders, or distinctly from them; Phil. i. 1. And the whole preservation of church-order, is on the account of this duty recommended unto them. Neither can what they do in compliance with their guides and rulers, be any part of their obedience unto the Lord Christ, unless they make previously thereunto a rational consideration and judgment by the rule of what is to be done. Neither is the church of Christ to be ruled without its knowledge, or against its will; nor in any thing is blind obedience acceptable to God.

2. The brethren of the church are intrusted with the privilege of giving and testifying their consent unto all acts of church power, which though it belong not formally unto the authority of them, it is necessary unto their validity and efficacy; and that so far forth, as that they are said to do and act what is done and effected thereby; 1 Cor. v. 4. 13. 2 Cor. ii. 6—8. And they who have this privilege of consent which hath so great an influence into the action

and validity of it, have also the liberty of dissent; when any thing is proposed to be done, the warrant whereof from the word and the rule of its performance, is not evident unto them.

Quest. 43. Wherein doth the exercise of the authority for discipline committed unto the elders of the church consist?

Ans. (1.) In personal private admonition of any member or members of the church, in case of sin, error, or any miscarriage known unto themselves. (2.) In public admonition in case of offences persisted in and brought orderly to the knowledge and consideration of the church. (3.) In the ejection of obstinate offenders from the society and communion of the church. (4.) In exhorting, comforting, and restoring to the enjoyment and exercise of church privileges such as are recovered from the error of their ways; all according to the laws, rules, and directions of the gospel. (1) Matt. xviii. 15. 1 Thess. v. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 14. Titus i. 13. ii. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 2. (2) 1 Tim. v. 19, 20. Matt. xviii. 16, 17. (3) Titus iii. 10. 1 Tim. i. 20. Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 5. Gal. v. 12. (4) 2 Cor. ii. 7. Gal. vi. i. 2 Thess. iii. 15.

Quest. 44. May the church cast any person out of its communion without previous admonition?

Ans. It may in some cases, where the offence is notorious, and the scandal grievous, so that nothing be done against other general rules. 1 Cor. iv.

Quest. 45. Wherein doth the liberty and duty of the whole brotherhood in the exercise of discipline in the church in particular consist?

Ans. (1.) In a meek consideration of the condition and temptations of offenders, with the nature of their offences, when orderly proposed unto the church. (2.) In judging with the elders according to rule, what in all cases of offence is necessary to be done, for the good of the offenders themselves, and for the edification and vindication of the whole church. (3.) In their consent unto, and concurrence in, the admonition, ejection, pardoning, and restoring of offenders, as the matter shall require. Gal. vi. 1, 2. 1 Cor. v. 2. 4, 5. 12. 1 Cor. vi. 2. 2 Cor. ii. 6—8.

Quest. 46. What is the duty of private members in reference unto the discipline appointed by Christ in his church ?

Ans. It is their duty in their mutual watch over one another, to exhort each other unto holiness and perseverance; and if they observe any thing in the ways and walkings of any of their fellow-members not according unto the rule and the duty of their profession, which therefore gives them offence, to admonish them thereof in private with love, meekness, and wisdom, and in case they prevail not unto their amendment, to take the assistance of some other brethren in the same work; and if they fail in success therein also, to report the matter by the elder's direction, unto the whole church. Matt. xviii. 16—18. 1 Thess. v. 14.

EXPLICATION.

In these questions an inquiry is made after the exercise of discipline in the church, as to that part of it which belongs unto the reproof and correction of miscarriages according to the distribution of right, power, and privilege, before explained.

The first act hereof consists in private admonition; for so hath our Lord ordained, that in case any brother, or member of the church, do in any thing walk disorderly, and not according to the rule of the gospel, that he, or they, unto whom it is observed, and who are thereby offended, may and ought to admonish the person or persons so offending of their miscarriage and offence; concerning which is to be observed,

First, What is previously required thereunto; and that is,

1. That in all the members of the church there ought to be love without dissimulation. They are to 'be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love,' Rom. xii. 9, 10. which as they are taught of God, so they are greatly exhorted thereunto; Heb. xiii. 1. This love is the bond of perfection, the most excellent way and means of preserving church-order, and furthering the edification thereof, 1 Cor. xiii. without which, well seated and confirmed in the hearts and minds of church members, no duty of their relation can ever be performed in a due manner.

2. This love is to exert and put forth itself in tender

care and watchfulness for the good of each other; which are to work by mutual exhortations, informations, instructions, according as opportunities do offer themselves, or as the necessities of any do seem to require; Heb. iii. 13. x. 24.

Secondly, This duty of admonishing offenders privately and personally, is common to the elders with all the members of the church; neither doth it belong properly unto the elders, as such, but as brethren of the same society. And yet by virtue of their office the elders are enabled to do it with more authority morally, though office-power properly be not exercised therein. By virtue also of their constant general watch over the whole flock in the discharge of their office, they are enabled to take notice of, and discern miscarriages in any of the members sooner than others. But as to the exercise of the discipline of the church in this matter, this duty is equally incumbent on every member of it, according as the obligation on them to watch over one another, and to exercise especial love towards each other is equal; whence it is distinguished from that private pastoral admonition, which is an act of the teaching office and power, not directly belonging unto the rule or government inquired after. But this admonition is an effect of love, and where it proceedeth not from thence it is irregular. Matt, xviii. 16—18. Rom. xv. 14.

Thirdly, This duty is so incumbent on every member of the church, that in case of the neglect thereof, he both sinneth against the institution of Christ, and makes himself partaker of the sin of the party offending, and is also guilty of his danger, and ruin thereby, with all that disadvantage which will accrue to the church, by any of the members of it continuing in sin against the rule of the gospel. They have not only liberty thus to admonish one another, but it is their express and indispensable duty so to do. The neglect whereof is interpreted by God to be 'hatred of our brother;' such as wherewith the love of God is inconsistent. Lev. xix. 17. 1 John iv. 20. iii. 15.

Fourthly, Although this duty be personally incumbent on every individual member of the church, yet this hinders not but if the sin of an offender be known to more than one at the same time, and they jointly take offence thereat, they

may together in the first instance admonish him, which yet still is but the first and private admonition, which is otherwise, when others are called into assistance, who are not themselves acquainted with the offence but only by information, and join in it, not upon the account of their own being offended, but of being desired according unto rule to give assistance to them that are so.

Fifthly, The way and manner of the discharge of this duty is, that it be done with prudence, tenderness, and due regard unto all circumstances; whence the apostle supposeth a spiritual ability to be necessary for this work. Rom. xv. 14. 'Ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another:' especially four things are to be diligently heeded.

1. That the whole duty be so managed, that the person offending may be convinced, that it is done out of love to him, and affectionate conscientious care over him, that he may take no occasion thereby for the exasperation of his own spirit.

2. That the persons admonishing others of their offence, do make it appear that what they do is in obedience unto an institution of Christ, and therein to preserve their own souls from sin, as well as to benefit the offenders.

3. That the admonition be grounded on a rule which alone gives it authority and efficacy.

4. That there be a readiness manifested by them to receive satisfaction; either, (1.) in case that upon trial it appeareth the information they have had of the miscarriage whence the offence arose was undue, or not well grounded; or, (2.) of acknowledgment and repentance.

Sixthly, The ends of this ordinance and institution of Christ are,

1. To keep up love without dissimulation among all the members of the church; for if offences should abide unremoved, love which is the bond of perfection would not long continue in sincerity, which tends to the dissolution of the whole society.

2. To gain the offender, by delivering him from the guilt of sin that he may not lie under it, and procure the wrath of God against himself; Lev. xix. 17.

3. To preserve his person from dishonour and disrepu-

tation, and thereby to keep up his usefulness in the church. To this end hath our Lord appointed the discharge of this duty in private, that the failings of men may not be unnecessarily divulged, and themselves thereby exposed unto temptation.

4. To preserve the church from that scandal that might befall it, by the hasty opening of all the real or supposed failings of its members. And,

5. To prevent its trouble in the public hearing of things that may be otherwise healed and removed.

Seventhly, In case these ends are obtained, either by the supposed offending persons clearing of themselves, and manifesting themselves innocent of the crimes charged on them, as Josh. xxii. 22—25. 2 Cor. vii. 11. or by their acknowledgment, repentance, and amendment, then this part of the discipline of the church hath, through the grace of Christ, obtained its appointed effect.

Eighthly, In case the persons offending be not humbled nor reformed, nor do give satisfaction unto them by whom they are admonished, then hath our Lord ordained a second degree of this private exercise of discipline; that the persons who being offended have discharged the foregoing duty themselves according unto rule, shall take unto them others, two or three, as the occasion may seem to require, to join with them in the same work and duty, to be performed in the same manner for the same ends, with that before described, Matt. xviii. 15—17. And it is the duty of these persons so called in for assistance,

1. To judge of the crime, fault, or offence, reported to them, and not to proceed unless they find it to consist in something expressly contrary to the rule of the gospel, and attested in such manner, and with such evidence, as their mutual love doth require in them with respect unto their brethren. And they are to judge of the testimony that is given concerning the truth of the offence communicated unto them, that they may not seem either lightly to take up a report against their brother, or to discredit the testimony of others.

2. In case they find the offence pretended not to be a real offence indeed contrary to the rule of the gospel, or that it is not aright grounded, as to the evidence of it, but

taken up upon prejudice, or an over-easy credulity, contrary to the law of that love which is required amongst church members, described 1 Cor. xiii. and commanded as the great means of the edification of the church and preservation of its union, then to convince the brother offended of his mistake, and with him to satisfy the person pretended to be the offender, that no breach or schism may happen among the members of the same body.

3. Being satisfied of the crime and testimony, they are to associate themselves with the offended brother in the same work and duty that he himself had before discharged towards the offender.

Ninthly, Because there is no determination how often these private admonitions are to be used in case of offence, it is evident from the nature of the thing itself that they are to be reiterated; first the one, and then the other, whilst there is any ground of hope, that the ends of them may be obtained through the blessing of Christ, the brother gained, and the offence taken away. Neither of these then is to be deserted, or laid aside, on the first or second attempt, as though it were performed only to make way for somewhat farther; but it is to be waited on with prayer and patience, as an ordinance of Christ appointed for attaining the end aimed at.

Tenthly, In case there be not the success aimed at obtained in these several degrees of private admonition, it is then the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the matter be reported unto the church, that the offended may be publicly admonished thereby, and brought to repentance; wherein is to be observed,

1. That the persons who have endeavoured in vain to reclaim their offending brother by private admonition, are to acquaint the elders of the church with the case and crime: as also what they have done according to rule, for the rectifying of it; who upon that information, are obliged to communicate the knowledge of the whole matter to the church. This is to be done by the elders, as to whom the preservation of order in the church, and the rule of its proceeding do belong, as we have shewed before.

2. The report made to the church by the elders is to be, *(1.) Of the crime*, guilt, or offence. (2.) Of the testi-

mony given unto the truth of it. (3.) Of the means used to bring the offender to acknowledgment and repentance. (4.) Of his deportment under the private previous admonitions either as to his rejecting of them, or as to any satisfaction tendered; all in order, love, meekness, and tenderness.

3. Things being proposed unto the church, and the offender heard upon the whole of the offence and former proceeding, the whole church or multitude of the brethren, are with the elders to consider the nature of the offence, with the condition and temptation of the offenders, with such a spirit of meekness as our Lord Jesus Christ in his own person set them an example of, in his dealing with sinners, and which is required in them as his disciples. Gal. vi. 1, 2. 2 Cor. ii. 8.

4. The elders and brethren are to judge of the offence, and the carriage of the offender according to rule; and if the offence be evident and persisted in, then,

5. The offender is to be publicly admonished by the elders, with the consent and concurrence of the church. 1 Thess. v. 14. 1 Tim. v. 20. Matt. xviii. 16, 17. And this admonition consists of five parts;

(1.) A declaration of the crime or offence, as it is evidenced unto the church.

(2.) A conviction of the evil of it, from the rule or rules transgressed against.

(3.) A declaration of the authority and duty of the church in such cases.

(4.) A rebuke of the offender in the name of Christ, answering the nature and circumstances of the offence.

(5.) An exhortation unto humiliation and repentance and acknowledgment.

Eleventhly, In case the offender despise this admonition of the church, and come not upon it unto repentance, it is the will and appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ that he be cut off from all the privileges of the church, and cast out from the society thereof, or be excommunicated, wherein consists the last act of the discipline of the church for the correction of offenders. And herein may be considered,

1. The nature of it, that it is an authoritative act, and so principally belongs unto the elders of the church, who therein exert the power that they have received from the

ord Christ, by and with the consent of the church accord-
g to his appointment, Matt. xvi. 19. xviii. 18. John xx.
. 1 Cor. v. 4. Titus iii. 10. 1 Tim. i. 20. 2 Cor. ii. 6.
nd both these, the authority of the eldership, and the con-
nt of the brethren, are necessary to the validity of the
ntence, and that according to the appointment of Christ,
d the practice of the first churches.

2. The effect of it, which is the cutting off, or casting
t, of the person offending from the communion of the
urch, in the privileges of the gospel, as consequently
om that of all the visible churches of Christ in the earth,
r virtue of their communion one with another, whereby he
left unto the visible kingdom of Satan in the world.
Iatt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 2. 5. 13. 1 Tim. i. 20. Titus iii. 10.
al. v. 12.

3. The ends of it, which are,

(1.) The gaining of the party offending, by bringing him
repentance, humiliation, and acknowledgment of his
fence. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. xiii. 10.

(2.) The warning of others not to do so presumptuously.

(3.) The preserving of the church in its purity and order;
Cor. v. 6, 7. all to the glory of Jesus Christ.

4. The causes of it, or the grounds and reasons on which
e church may proceed unto sentence against any offend-
g persons. Now these are no other but such as they
dge according to the gospel, that the Lord Christ will
roceed upon in his final judgment at the last day. For the
hurch judgeth in the name and authority of Christ, and are
exclude none from its communion, but those whom they
nd by the rule, that he himself excludes from his kingdom;
nd so that which they bind on earth, is bound by him in
aven; Matt. xviii. 18. And their sentence herein is to
e declared, as the declaration of the sentence which the
ead of the church, and judge of all, will pronounce at the
st day; only with this difference, that it is also made
nown, that this sentence of theirs, is not final or decretory,
t in order to the prevention of that which will be so, unless
e evil be repented of. Now although the particular evils,
ns, or offences, that may render a person obnoxious unto
is censure and sentence, are not to be enumerated, by
eason of the variety of circumstances which change the

nature of actions, yet they may in general be referred unto these heads:

(1.) Moral evils, contrary to the light of nature, and express commands or prohibitions of the moral law, direct rules of the gospel, or of evil report in the world amongst men walking according to the rule and light of reason. And in cases of this nature, the church may proceed unto the sentence whereof we speak, without previous admonition, in case the matter of fact be notorious, publicly and unquestionably known to be true, and no general rule (which is not to be impeached by particular instances) lie against their procedure. 1 Cor. v. 3, 4. 2 Tim. iii. 2—5.

(2.) Offences against that mutual love which is the bond of perfection in the church if pertinaciously persisted in — Matt. xviii. 16, 17.

(3.) False doctrines against the fundamentals in faith or worship, especially if maintained with contention, to the trouble and disturbance of the peace of the church — Gal. v. 12. Titus iii. 9—11. 1 Tim. vi. 3—5. Rev. ii. 14, 15.

(4.) Blasphemy, or evil speaking of the ways and worship of God in the church, especially if joined with an intention to hinder the prosperity of the church, or to expose it to persecution. 1 Tim. i. 20.

(5.) Desertion, or total causeless relinquishment of the society and communion of the church; for such are self-condemned, having broken and renounced the covenant of God, that they made at their entrance into the church. Heb. x. 25—29.

5. The time or season of the putting forth the authority of Christ in the church for this censure, is to be considered; and that is ordinarily after the admonition before described, and that with due waiting, to be regulated by a consideration of times, persons, temptations, and other circumstances. For,

(1.) The church in proceeding to this sentence, is to express the patience and long-suffering of Christ towards offenders, and not to put it forth without conviction of a present resolved impenitency.

(2.) The event and effect of the preceding ordinance of admonition is to be expected; which though not at present

nident, yet like the word itself in the preaching of it, may e blessed to a good issue after many days.

6. The person offending, thus cut off, or cast out from he present actual communion of the church, is still to e looked on and accounted as a brother, because of the ture of the ordinance which is intended for his amend- ent and recovery. 2 Thess. iii. 15. 'Count him not as an emy, but admonish him as a brother;' unless he manifest is final impenitency, by blasphemy and persecution: 1 Tim. 20. 'Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may arn not to blaspheme.'

7. The church is therefore still to perform the duties of ve and care towards such persons.

(1.) In praying for them, that they 'may be converted rom the error of their way;' James v. 19, 20. 1 John v. 6. 'If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not nto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for hem that sin not unto death.'

(2.) In withdrawing from them even as to ordinary con- erse for their conviction of their state and condition. 1 Cor. . 11. 2 Thess. iii. 14. 'With such a one no not to eat.'

(3.) In admonishing of him. 2 Cor. iii. 15. 'Admonish him s a brother;' which may be done, [1.] Occasionally, by any member of the church; [2.] On set purpose, by the consent and appointment of the whole church; which admonition is to contain,

1st. A pressing of his sin from the rule on the conscience of the offender.

2dly. A declaration of the nature of the censure and pu- nishment which he lieth under.

3dly. A manifestation of the danger of his impenitency, in his being either hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, or exposed unto new temptations of Satan.

8. In case the Lord Jesus be pleased to give a blessed effect unto this ordinance in the repentance of the person cut off and cast out of the church, he is,

(1.) To be forgiven both by those who in an especial manner were offended at him, and by him, and by the whole church. Matt. xviii. 18. 2 Cor. ii. 7.

(2.) To be comforted under his sorrow, 2 Cor. ii. 7. and that by, [1.] The application of the promises of the gospel

unto his conscience; [2.] A declaration of the readiness of the church to receive him again into their love and communion.

(4.) Restored, [1.] By a confirmation or testification of the love of the church unto him; 2 Cor. ii. 8. [2.] A re-admission unto the exercise and enjoyment of his former priviledges in the fellowship of the church; all with a spirit of meekness. Gal. vi. 1.

Quest. 47. The preservation of the church in purity, order, and holiness, being provided for, by what way is it to be continued and increased?

Ans. The way appointed thereunto is, by adding such as being effectually called unto the obedience of faith shall voluntarily offer themselves unto the society and fellowship thereof. Acts ii. 41. 2 Cor. viii. 5.

EXPLICATION.

The means appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ for the continuance and increase of the church, are either preparatory unto it, or instrumentally efficient of it. The principal means subservient or preparatory unto the continuance and increase of the church, is the preaching of the word to the conviction, illumination, and conversion of sinners, whereby they may be made meet to become living stones in this spiritual building, and members of the mystical body of Christ. And this is done either ordinarily in the assemblies of the church, towards such as come in unto them and attend to the word dispensed according to the appointment of Christ amongst them: 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 'If there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God:' or occasionally amongst the men of the world, Acts viii. 4.

Secondly, The instrumentally efficient cause is that which is expressed in the answer, namely, the adding in due order unto it, such as being effectually called unto the obedience of the faith and profession of the gospel, do voluntarily, out of conviction of their duty, and resolution to walk in subjection to all the ordinances and commands of Christ, offer themselves to the society and fellowship thereof, whereby they

may be laid in this spiritual building as the stones were in the temple of old, which were hewed and fitted elsewhere.

Quest. 48. What is required of them who desire to join themselves unto the church?

Ans. (1.) That they be free from blame and offence in the world. (2.) That they be instructed in the saving truths and mysteries of the gospel. (3.) Sound in the faith. (4.) That the Lord having called them unto faith, repentance, and newness of life by Jesus Christ, they give up themselves to be saved by him, and to obey him in all things. And therefore, (5.) Are willing and ready, through his grace, to walk in subjection to all his commands, and in the observation of all his laws and institutions, notwithstanding our difficulties, oppositions, or persecutions, which they meet withal. (1) Phil. i. 10. ii. 15. 1 Cor. x. 32. 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Titus ii. 10. (2) John vi. 15. Acts xxvi. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. 6. (3) 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. Titus i. 13. Jude 3. (4) Eph. iv. 20—24. (5) 2 Cor. viii. 5.

Quest. 49. What is the duty of the elders of the church towards persons desiring to be admitted unto the fellowship of the church?

Ans. (1.) To discern and judge by the rule of truth applied in love, between sincere professors and hypocritical pretenders. (2.) To influence, direct, comfort, and encourage in the way, such as they judge to love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. (3.) To propose and recommend them unto the whole church, with prayers and supplications to God for them. (4.) To admit them being approved into the order and fellowship of the gospel in the church. Acts viii. 20. 23. Titus i. 10. Rev. ii. 2. Jer. xv. 19. Acts xviii. 26. 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8. 11. Acts ix. 27. 29. Rom. xiv. 1.

Quest. 50. What is the duty of the whole church in reference unto such persons?

Ans. To consider them in love and meekness, according as their condition is known, reported, or testified unto them, to approve of, and rejoice in, the grace of God in them, and to receive them in love without dissimulation. 1 Cor. xiii.

EXPLICATION.

What in general is required unto the fitting of any persons *to be members of* a visible church of Christ, was be-

fore declared; and that is, that which the Lord Jesus hath made the indispensable condition of entering into his kingdom, namely, of being 'born again;' John iii. 33. This work being secret, hidden, and invisible, the church cannot judge of directly, and in its own form or nature, but in the means, effects, and consequents of it, which are to be testified unto it concerning them who are to be admitted unto its fellowship and communion. It is required therefore of them,

First, That they be of a conversation free from blame in the world; for whereas one end of the gathering of churches is, to hold forth and express the holiness of the doctrine of Christ and the power of his grace in turning men from all ungodliness unto sobriety, righteousness, and honesty, it is required of them that are admitted into them, that they answer this end. And this the principle of grace which is communicated unto them that believe, will effect and produce. For although it doth not follow that every one who hath attained an unblamable honesty in this world, is inwardly quickened with a true principle of saving grace, yet it doth that they who are endowed with that principle will be so unblamable. And although they may on other accounts be evil spoken of, yet their good conversation in Christ will justify itself.

Secondly, Competent knowledge in the mysteries of the gospel is another means whereby the great qualification inquired after is testified unto the church. For as without this no privilege of the gospel can be profitably made use of, nor any duty of it rightly performed; so saving light is of the essence of conversion and doth inseparably accompany it. 2 Cor. iv. 6. 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' Where this is wanting, it is impossible for any person to evidence that he is delivered from that blindness, darkness, and ignorance, which all men are under the power of in the state of nature. Such a measure then of light and knowledge, as whereby men are enabled to apprehend aright of the person and offices of Christ, of the nature of his mediation, the benefits thereof, and the obedience that he requires at the hands of his disciples, is expected in them who desire to be admitted into the fellowship of the church.

Thirdly, Hereunto is to be added, soundness in the faith. For the unity of faith is the foundation of love and all the duties thereof, which in an especial manner are to be performed towards the church, called therefore the 'household of faith.' There is among the members of the church 'one faith;' Eph. iv. 5. the common faith, 'the faith once delivered unto the saints,' Jude 3. which is the 'sound doctrine,' 1 Tim. i. 10. which those that will not endure, must be turned from, 2 Tim. iv. 3. the 'faithful word,' that is to be held fast, Titus i. 9. 1 Tim. i. 19. and which we are to be sound in, Titus i. 13. contained in a 'form of sound words,' as to the profession of it; 2 Tim. i. 13. And this soundness in the unity of faith, as it should be improved unto oneness of mind, and oneness of accord, in all the things of God, Phil. ii. 2. though it may admit of some different apprehensions in some things, wherein some may have more clear and distinct discoveries of the mind and will of God than others, which hinders not, but that all may walk according to the same rule, Phil. iii. 15, 16. so it is principally to be regarded in the fundamental truths of the gospel, in and by the faith whereof the church holdeth on the head Jesus Christ, Col. ii. 19. and in the fundamental principles of gospel worship, the joint celebration whereof is the next end of the gathering the church; for without a consent of mind and accord herein, no duty can be performed unto edification, nor the peace of the church be preserved: and these principles are those which we have explained.

Fourthly, It is required that these things be testified by them unto the church, with the acknowldgement of the work of God's grace towards them, and their resolution through the power of the same grace to cleave unto the Lord Christ with full purpose of heart, and to live in all holy obedience unto him. They come to the church, as disciples of Christ, professing that they have learnt the truth as it is in Jesus, which what it infers the apostle teacheth at large, Eph. iv. 20—24. See also Acts xi. 23. viii. 21—23. And this by themselves to be testified unto the church.

1. That they may be received in love without dissi-

mulation, as real partakers in the same faith, hope, and salvation with themselves, as living members of the mystical body of Christ.

2. That on all ensuing occasions, they may be minded of their own profession and engagements to stir them up thereby unto faithfulness, steadfastness, and perseverance. Hereupon are the elders of the church to judge by the rule of truth in love and meekness concerning their condition, and meetness to be laid as living stones in the house of God: so as that they may,

(1.) Reject false hypocritical pretenders, if in or by any means their hypocrisy be discovered unto them. Acts viii. 20. 23. Titus i. 10. Jer. xv. 19.

(2.) That they may direct, and encourage in the way, such as appear to be sincere, instructing them principally in the nature of the way whereinto they are engaging, the duties, dangers, and benefits of it. Acts xviii. 26. xiv. 22. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

(3.) To propose them, their condition, their desires, their resolutions, unto the church after their own expressions of them, to be considered of in love and meekness; Acts ix. 26, 27. Whereupon those that are approved, do give up themselves unto the Lord, to walk in the observation of all his commands and ordinances, and to the church for the Lord's sake, 2 Cor. viii. 5. abiding in the fellowship thereof, whereunto they are admitted. Acts ii. 41, 42.

Quest. 51. Wherein doth the especial form of a particular church whereby it becomes such, and is distinguished as such from all others, consist?

Ans. In the special consent and agreement of all the members of it, to walk together in the observation of the same ordinances numerically; hence its constitution and distinction from other churches doth proceed. Exod. xix. 5. 8. xxiv. 3. 7. Deut. xxvi. 17. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Acts xiv. 23. xx. 28. Heb. xiii. 17.

EXPLICATION.

It hath been before declared, what especial agreement or covenant there ought to be among all the members of the same church, to walk together in a due subjection unto,

and observance of, all the institutions of the Lord Christ. And this is that which gives it its special form and distinction from all other churches. In the general nature of a church, all churches do agree, and equally partake. There is the same law of the constitution of them all; they have all the same rule of obedience; all the same head, the same end; all carry it on by the observation of the same ordinances in kind. Now besides these things which belong unto the nature of a church in general, and wherein they all equally participate, they must also have each one its proper difference, that which doth distinguish it from all other churches; and this gives it its special form as such. Now this cannot consist in any thing that is accidental, occasional, or extrinsical unto it, such as is cohabitation (which yet the church may have respect unto, for conveniency, and furthering of its edification) nor in any civil or political disposal of its members into civil societies for civil ends, which is extrinsical to all its concernments as a church; nor doth it consist in the relation of that church to its present officers, which may be removed or taken away without the dissolution of the form or being of the church; but it consisteth, as was said, in the agreement or covenant before mentioned. For,

First, This is that which constitutes them a distinct body, different from others; for thereby and no otherwise do they coalesce into a society, according to the laws of their constitution and appointment.

Secondly, This gives them their especial relation unto their own elders, rulers, or guides, who watch over them as so associated by their own consent, according unto the command of Christ. And,

Thirdly, From hence they have their mutual especial relation unto one another, which is the ground of the especial exercise of all church duties whatsoever.

Quest. 52. Wherein consists the duty of any church of Christ towards other churches?

Ans. (1.) In walking circumspectly, so as to give them no offence. (2.) In prayer for their peace and prosperity. (3.) In communicating supplies to their wants according to ability. (4.) In receiving with love and readiness the mem-

bers of them into fellowship, in the celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, as occasion shall be. (5.) In desiring and making use of their counsel and advice in such cases of doubt and difficulty, as may arise among them. (6.) In joining with them to express their communion in the same doctrine of faith. (1) 1 Cor. x. 32. (2) Psal. cxxii. 6. Eph. vi. 18. 1 Tim. ii. 1. (3) 2 Cor. viii. 4. 6. Acts xi. 29, 30. Rom. xv. 26, 27. (4) Rom. xvi. 1, 2. 3 John 8, 9. (5) Acts xv. ii. (6) 1 Tim. iii. 15.

EXPLICATION.

Churches being gathered and settled according to the mind of Christ, ought to preserve a mutual holy communion among themselves, and to exercise it, in the discharge of those duties whereby their mutual good and edification may be promoted. For whereas they are all united under one head, the Lord Christ, Eph. i. 22, 23. in the same faith and order, chap. iv. 5. and do walk by the same rule, they stand in such a relation one to another, as is the ground of the communion spoken of. Now the principal ways, whereby they exercise this communion, are the acts and duties enumerated in the answer unto this question. As,

First, Careful walking so as to give no offence unto one another; which although it be a moral duty in reference unto all, yet therein especial regard is to be had unto other churches of Christ, that they be not in any thing grieved or tempted. 1 Cor. x. 32. 'Give none offence; neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.'

Secondly, In constant prayer for the peace, welfare, edification, and prosperity one of another. Rom. i. 9. Col. i. 9. Eph. vi. 18. And this because of the special concernment of the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in their welfare.

Thirdly, In communicating of supplies for their relief according unto their ability, in case of the outward wants, straits, dangers, or necessities of any of them. Acts xi. 29, 30. Rom. xv. 26, 27. 2 Cor. viii. 1—4. 6. 14.

Fourthly, The receiving of the members of other churches to communion, in the celebration of church ordinances, is

another way whereby this communion of churches is exercised; Rom. xvi. 1, 2. 3 John viii. 9. For whereas the personal right of such persons unto the ordinances of the church, and their orderly walking in the observation of the commands of Christ, are known by the testimony of the church whereof they are members, they may without farther inquiry or satisfaction given, be looked on 'pro tempore' as members of the church wherein they desire fellowship, and participation of the ordinances of Christ.

Fifthly, In desiring or making use of the counsel and advice of one another, in such cases of doubt and difficulty, whether doctrinal, or practical, as may arise in any of them; Acts xv. 2. 6. And from hence it follows, that in case any church, either by error in doctrine, or precipitation, or mistake in other administrations, do give offence unto other churches, those other churches may require an account from them, admonish them of their faults, and withhold communion from them, in case they persist in the error of their way; and that because in their difficulties, and before their miscarriages, they were bound to have desired the advice, counsel, and assistance of those other churches, which being neglected by them, the other are to recover the end of it unto their utmost ability; Gal. ii. 6. 11. And hence also it follows, that those that are rightly and justly censured in any church, ought to be rejected by all churches whatever; both because of their mutual communion, and because it is, and ought to be presumed, until the contrary be made to appear, that in case there had been any difficulty or doubt in the procedure of the church, they would have taken the advice of those churches, with whom they were obliged to consult.

Lastly, Whereas the churches have all of them one common faith, and are all obliged to hold forth and declare it to all men as they have opportunity, 1 Tim. iii. 15. to testify this their mutual communion, their interest in the same faith and hope, for the more open declaration and proposition of the truths of the gospel which they profess, and for the vindication both of the truth, and themselves, from false charges and imputations, they may, and if God give opportunity, ought, to join together in declaring and testifying

their joint consent and fellowship in the same doct
faith, expressed in a 'form of sound words.'

Quest. 53. What are the ends of all this dispe
and order of things in the church?

Ans. The glory of God, the honour of Jesus Ch
Mediator, the furtherance of the gospel, the edificati
consolation of believers here; with their eternal sa
hereafter. Rev. iv. 9—11. v. 12, 13. 1 Cor. iii.
Eph. iv. 11—13.

A

BRIEF VINDICATION

OF

THE NONCONFORMISTS

FROM THE

CHARGE OF SCHISM:

AS IT WAS MANAGED AGAINST THEM IN A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE LORD MAYOR; BY DR. STILLINGFLEET, DEAN OF ST. PAULS.

Coitio Christianorum merito sane illicita, si illicitis par; merito damnanda, si quis de ea queritur eo titulo quo de factionibus querela est. In cujus perniciem aliquando convenimus? Hoc sumus congregati quod et dispersi; hoc universi quod et singuli; neminem lædentes, neminem contristantes; quum probi, cum boni coeunt, cum pii, cum casti congregantur, non est factio dicenda, sed curia.—Tertul.

A

BRIEF VINDICATION

OF

THE NONCONFORMISTS

FROM THE

CHARGE OF SCHISM.

It was no small surprise unto many, first to hear of, and then to see in print, the late sermon of the Rev. Dean of St. Paul's, preached at Guildhall, May 2, 1680, being the first Sunday in Easter Term, before the Lord Mayor, &c.

Whatever there might be of truth in it, yet they judged the time both of the one and the other, the preaching and printing of it, to be somewhat unseasonable. For, they say, that this is a time wherein the agreement of all Protestants, so far as they have attained, is made more than ordinarily necessary. And whereas the nonconformists do agree in religion with all the sober Protestant people of the nation, which is the church of England, they do suppose that ordinary prudence would advise unto a forbearance of them in those few things wherein they dissent, not indeed from the body of the Protestant people, but from some that would impose them on their consciences and practices. Who knows not that the present danger of this nation is from popery, and the endeavours that are used both to introduce it and enthrone it, or give it power and authority among us? And it is no part of the popish design to take away and destroy those things wherein the nonconformists do dissent from the present ecclesiastical establishment, but rather to confirm them. Their contrivance is to ruin and destroy the religion of the body of the Protestants in this kingdom, wherein the nonconformists are one with them, and equally concerned *with any of them.* Wherefore it cannot but be grievous

unto them, as well as useless unto the common interest of the Protestant religion, that at such a time and season they should be reflected on, charged and severely treated on the account of those lesser differences which no way disenable them from being useful and serviceable unto the government and nation in the defence and preservation of the Protestant religion. And that it is their resolution so to be, they have given sufficient evidence, equal at least with that given by any sort of people in the nation; yea, of their diligence in opposition unto popery, and their readiness to observe the direction of the magistrates therein whilst the plot hath been in agitation; they suppose the honourable person unto whom this sermon is dedicated, can and will bear them witness.

In these circumstances, to be required severely to change their judgments and practices, as it were 'momento turbinis,' immediately and in an instant; or else to be looked on and treated as adversaries; many do think as unseasonable, as to command a good part of an army when it is actually engaged against an enemy, to change all their order, postures, discipline, and advantages, or immediately to depart out of the field. And they do withal suppose that such a sudden change is least of all to be expected to be wrought by such severe charges and reflections as are made on all nonconformists in this discourse. Such like things as these do men talk concerning the season of the preaching and publishing of this sermon: but in such things every man is to be left unto his own prudence, whereof he may not esteem himself obliged to give an account.

For my part, I judge it not so unseasonable as some others do. For it is meet that honest men should understand the state of those things wherein they are greatly and deeply concerned. Nonconformists might possibly suppose, that the common danger of all Protestants had reconciled the minds of the conforming ministry unto them, so as that they were more than formerly inclined unto their forbearance, and I was really of the same judgment myself. If it be not so, it is well they are fairly warned what they have to expect, that they may prepare themselves to undergo it with patience. But we shall pass by these things, and attend a little *unto* the consideration of the sermon itself.

The design of this discourse seems to consist in these hree things, or to aim at them.

1. To prove all the nonconformists to be guilty of chism, and a sinful separation from the church of England.

2. To aggravate their supposed guilt and crime, both n its nature, and all the pernicious consequences of it that an be imagined.

3. To charge them, especially their ministers, with want f sincerity and honesty in the management of their dissent rom the church of England, with reference unto the people hat hear them. What there is of truth in these things, or hat there may be of mistake in them, it is the duty of non-onformists to try and examine. But some few things must ave a previous consideration before we come to the merits f the cause itself.

1. The reverend author of this discourse affirms, that n the preaching of this sermon he was 'far from intending o stir up the magistrates and judges unto a persecution of issenters, as some ill men have reported.' Epist. Ded. With-ut this information I confess I could not but judge it would ave been as liable unto a supposition of such a design, as ie actings of the nonconformists in the management of their ause, are unto that of insincerity in the judgment of this verend author. For,

(1.) It was not preached unto nonconformists, perhaps ot one of them being present; so that the intention of preach-g it could not be their conviction. They were not likely ther to hear the charge, or the reasons of it.

(2.) It was preached unto them who were no way guilty f the pretended crime reproved; but peculiarly such as were trusted with the execution of the penal laws against them at were supposed guilty, magistrates and judges, which in nother would have but an ill aspect. If a man should go nto a justice of the peace, and complain that his neighbour a thief, or a swearer, or a murderer; though he should give ie justice never so many arguments to prove that his eighbour did very ill in being so and doing so, yet his busi-ess would seem to be the execution of the law upon him. ut let the will of God be done, nonconformists are not much ncerned in these things.

We are likewise informed in the same epistle, that there

are 'no sharp and provoking expressions' on the persons of any. It is indeed beneath the gravity and dignity of this reverend author, to bring reviling or railing accusations against any; neither will he, I am sure, give countenance to such a practice in others, which is seldom used but by men of very mean consideration. But I am not satisfied that he hath not used even great severity in reflections on a whole party of men, and that unprovoked. Nor do I know how persons on a religious account can be more severely reflected on, and that not only as unto their opinions and practices, but also as unto the sincerity of their hearts and honesty of their designs, than the nonconformists are in this sermon.

I have seen a collection made of such reflections by the hand of a person of honour, a member of the church of England, with his judgment upon them; wherein they appear to me not to be a true resemblance or representation of Christian love and charity.

2. A great part of this discourse being such as became a popular auditor, consisting in generals on all hands acknowledged, as the good of union, the evil of schism, and causeless separation, &c. which will indifferently serve any party until it be determined where the original fault and mistake doth lie; I shall not at all take notice of it, though it be so dressed, as to be laid at the door of nonconformists in a readiness for an application unto their disadvantage: but nothing that by way of argument, testimony, or instance is produced, to prove the charge mentioned, and the consequents of it, shall be omitted.

3. Some few things may be taken notice of in the passage of the author unto his text; of that nature is his complaint, p. 2. 'There is just cause for many sad reflections, when neither the miseries we have felt, nor the calamities we fear; neither the terrible judgments of God upon us, nor the unexpected deliverance vouchsafed unto us, nor the common danger we are yet in, have abated men's hearts, or allayed their passions, or made them more willing to unite with our established church and religion: but instead of that, some stand at a greater distance, if not defiance.' It is acknowledged willingly by us, that the warnings and calls of God unto this nation have been great and marvellous, and yet continue so to be. But it is worthy our inquiry, whether

this be to be looked on as the only end and design of them, that the nonconformists do immediately in all things comply with the established church and religion, and are evidences of God's displeasure because they do not so; when he who searcheth their hearts doth know that they would do it, were it not for fear of his displeasure? What if it should be the design of God in them to call the nation and so the church of England unto repentance and reformation, which when all is done, is the only way of reconciling all Protestant dissenters? What if God should in them testify against all the atheism, profaneness, sensuality, that abound in this nation, unto the public scandal of it, with the dread and terror of those by whom they are duly considered, the persons guilty of them being no way proceeded against by any discipline of the church, nor any reformation of the church itself, from such horrible pollutions once attempted? Every man who knows any thing of Christ, of his law, gospel, rule, and discipline, of the nature, end, and use of them, with the worship of God to be performed in them and by them, and doth withal consider the terror of the Lord unto whom an account is to be given of these things, must acknowledge, that both in persons and things there is a necessity of reformation among us, on the utmost perils of the displeasure of Christ Jesus; yet no such reformation is so much as endeavoured in a due manner. It is no encouragement unto conscientious men to unite themselves absolutely and in all things unto such a church as doth not, as will not, or as cannot, reform itself in such a degenerate state as that which many churches in the world are at this day openly and visibly fallen into. And to deal plainly with our brethren (if they will allow us to call them so), that they may know what to expect, and, if it be the will of God, be directed unto the only true way of uniting all Protestants in the only bands of evangelical union, order, and communion, unless those who are concerned will endeavour, and until they are enabled in some measure to effect a reformation in the ministry and people, as unto their relation to the church as also in some things in the worship of God itself, it is vain to expect that the nonconformists should unite with the church, however established. And may we not think that those many warnings and calls of God may have some respect unto these abominations that are found in the

nation, yea, such as without a due reformation of them will issue in our desolation? I do know, that with the nonconformists also, there are 'sins against the Lord their God;' and it will be a great addition unto their sins, as also an aggravation of their guilt, if they comply not with the warnings of God, as they are here expressed by this reverend author, so as to reform whatever is amiss in them, and return wholly unto God from all their wanderings. But as unto those things which are usually charged on them, they are such as interest, hatred, and the desire of their ruin, suggest unto the minds of their adversaries; or are used by some against their science and conscience to further that end, without the least pretence to be raised from any thing in them, their opinions, practices, or conversation in the world. Doth atheism abound among us? it is from the differences in religion made by nonconformists. Is there danger of popery? it is because of the nonconformists. Are the judgments of God coming on the nation? it is for nonconformity. So was it of old with the Christians; 'Si Tybris ascendit in mœnia, si Nilus non ascendit in arva, si cœlum stetit, si terra movit, si fames, si lues; statim Christianos ad leonem.'

4. The immediate introduction unto the opening of his text, is an account of the differences and divisions that were in the primitive churches occasioned by the Judaizing Christians, who contended for the observation of the ceremonies of the law; but some things may be added unto his account which are necessary unto the right stating of that case, as it may have any respect unto our present differences. And we may observe,

(1.) That those with and concerning whom the apostle dealeth in his epistle, were principally those of the Jewish church and nation, who had owned the gospel, professed faith in Christ Jesus, had received (many of them) spiritual gifts, or 'tasted of the powers of the world to come,' and did join in the worship of God in the assemblies of the Christians. I only mention this, because some places quoted usually in this matter, do relate directly unto the unbelieving Jews, which went up and down to oppose the preaching of Christ and the gospel in rage and fury, stirring up persecution everywhere against them that were employed in it.

(2.) This sort of persons were freely allowed by the

apostle to continue in the use of those rites and ceremonies which they esteemed themselves obliged unto by virtue of Moses's law, granting them in all other things the privilege of believers, and such as whom they would not in any thing offend. So do James, and the elders of the church declare themselves, Acts xxi. 21, &c.

Yea, (3.) Out of tenderness unto them, and to prevent all offence to be taken by them at the liberty of the Gentiles, they did order that the believers of the Gentiles, should forbear for a season the use of their natural liberty in some few things, whereby the other were, in their common meetings, as in eating and drinking together, usually scandalized; giving them also unto the same end, direction concerning one thing evil in itself, whose long usage and practice among the Gentiles had obliterated a sense of its guilt, wherewith they could not but be much offended.

(4.) With this determination, or state of things thus settled by the apostles, (no doubt but that) a multitude of the Jewish believers did rest content and satisfied. But certain it is, that with many of them it was otherwise. They were no way pleased that they were left unto the freedom of their own judgment and practice, in the use and observance of the legal ceremonies, but they would impose the observation of them on all the churches of the Gentiles wherever they came. Nothing would serve their turn, but that all other churches must observe their ceremonies, or they would not admit them unto communion with them. And in the pursuit of this design, they prevailed for a season on whole churches, to forego the liberty wherein Christ had made them free, and to take on them the yoke of bondage which they imposed on them, as it was with the churches of the Galatians.

I have mentioned these things, only to shew how remote we are from any access unto those opinions and practices which caused the first divisions in Christian churches, and among all sorts of believers. We agree with our brethren in the faith of the gospel, as the Gentiles did with the believing Jews; we have nothing to impose in religion, on the consciences or practices of any other churches or persons; we are not offended that others, be they many or few, should *use their own choice*, liberty, and judgment, in the govern-

ment, discipline, worship, and ceremonies of pretended order, nor do envy them the advantages which they have thereby; we desire nothing but what the churches of the Gentiles desired of old, as the only means to prevent division in them, namely, that they might not be imposed on to observe those things which they were not satisfied that it was the mind of Christ they should observe; for he had taken all the churches under his own power, requiring that they should be taught to do and observe all that he commanded them, and nothing else that we know of. We desire no more of our governors, rulers, brethren (if they think so) in the ministry, but that we be not with outward force, and destructive penalties, compelled to comply with and practise in the worship of God, such things as for our lives, and to save ourselves from the greatest ruin, we cannot conceive that it is the mind of Christ that we should do and observe; that whilst we are peaceable and useful in our places, firmly united unto the body of the Protestants in this nation (which, as this author tells us, is the church of England), in confession of the same faith, and common interest, for the maintenance and preservation of that one religion which we profess, we be not deprived of that liberty, which God and nature, Christ and the gospel, the example of the primitive churches, and the present Protestant interest of this nation do testify to be our due.

These things being premised, because I have no design to except against any thing in the discourse of the reverend author of this sermon, wherein the merit of the cause is not immediately concerned; nor to seek for advantages from expressions; nor to draw a saw of contention about things not necessary unto that defence of our innocency which alone I have undertaken (as is the way of the most in the management of controversies), I shall pass on unto the charge itself, or the consideration of the arguments and reasons, whereon all nonconformists are charged with schism, &c.

But yet because there are some things insisted on by the author, in the progress of his discourse, according as he judged the method to be most convenient for the managing of his charge, which I judge not so convenient unto the present defence, I shall speak briefly unto them, or some of

them, before I proceed unto what is more expressly argumentative. As,

1. He chargeth the nonconformist ministers, for conconcealing their opinions and judgments from the people, about the lawfulness of their communion with the church, and that for ends easily to be discerned (that is, their own advantage); that is, they do indeed judge that it is lawful for the people to hold communion with the church of England, but will not let them know so much, lest they should forsake their ministry.

Pages 19, 20. 'I do not intend to speak of the terms upon which persons are to be admitted among us to the exercise of the function of the ministry, but of the terms of lay-communion, i. e. those which are necessary for all persons to join in our prayers and sacraments, and other offices of divine worship. I will not say, there hath been a great deal of art to confound these two (and it is easy to discern to what purpose it is), but I dare say the people's not understanding the difference of these two cases, hath been a great occasion of the present separation. For in the judgment of some of the most impartial men of the dissenters at this day, although they think the case of the ministers very hard on account of subscriptions and declarations required of them; yet they confess very little is to be said on the behalf of the people, from whom none of those things are required. So that the people are condemned in their separation, by their own teachers; but how they can preach lawfully to a people who commit a fault in hearing them, I do not understand.'

And the same thing is yet managed with more severity, pp. 37, 38. in words that I shall at large transcribe.

'I dare say, if most of the preachers at this day in the separate meetings were soberly asked their judgments, whether it were lawful for the people to join with us in the public assemblies, they would not deny it, and yet the people that frequent them generally judge otherwise. For it is not to be supposed, that faction among them should so commonly prevail beyond interest; and therefore if they thought it were lawful for them to comply with the laws, they would do it. But why then is this kept up as such a mighty secret in the breasts of their teachers? Why do

they not preach to them in their congregations? Is it for fear they should have none left to preach to?—that is not to be imagined of mortified and conscientious men. Is it lest they should seem to condemn themselves, whilst they preach against separation in a separate congregation?

'This, I confess, looks oddly, and the tenderness of a man's mind in such a case, may out of mere shamefacedness keep him from declaring a truth which flies in his face while he speaks it.

'Is it that they fear the reproaches of the people? Which some few of the most eminent persons among them have found they must undergo, if they touch upon this subject (for I know not how it comes to pass, that the most godly people among them, can the least endure to be told of their faults). But is it not as plainly written by St. Paul,[a] 'If I yet serve men, I should not be the servant of Christ;' as, 'Woe be unto me if I preach not the gospel?' If they therefore would acquit themselves like honest and conscientious men, let them tell the people plainly that they look on our churches as true churches, and that they may lawfully communicate with us in prayers and sacraments; and I do not question but in time, if they find it lawful, they will judge it to be their duty. For it is the apostle's command here, 'Whereto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.'

A crime this is which, if true, is not easily to be expiated: nor can men give greater evidence of their own hypocrisy, insincerity, and government by corrupt ends and designs, than by such abominable arts and contrivances. So if it should prove not to be true, it cannot but be looked on as animated by such an evil surmise as is of no small provocation in the sight of God and men.

This reverend author makes a distinction about communion with the church, p. 20. between what is required of ministers, and that which is called lay-communion, which is the foundation of this charge.

'I do not confound bare suspending communion in some particular rites, which persons do modestly scruple, and using it in what they judge to be lawful; with either total, or at least ordinary, forbearance of communion in what

[a] Gal. i. 1.

they judge to be lawful, and proceeding to the forming of separate congregations, i. e. under other teachers, and by other rules than what the established religion allows. And this is the present case of separation which I intend to consider, and to make the sinfulness and mischief of it appear.'

But he knows that by the communion and uniting ourselves unto the church, which is pressed either on ministers or people, a total submission unto the rule as established in the Book of Canons, and Rubrick of the Liturgy, is required of them all. When this is once engaged in, there is no suspending of communion in particular rites to be allowed; they who give up themselves hereunto, must observe the whole rule to a tittle. Nor is it in the power of this reverend author, who is of great dignity in the church, and as like as any man I know to be inclined thereunto, to give indulgence unto them in their abstinence from the least ceremony enjoined. Wherefore the question about lay-communion, is concerning that which is absolute and total, according unto all that is enjoined by the laws of the land, or by the canons, constitutions, and orders of the church. Hereby are they obliged to bring their children to be baptized with the use of the aerial sign of the cross; to kneel at the communion; to the religious observation of holy-days; to the constant use of the Liturgy in all the public offices of the church, unto the exclusion of the exercise of those gifts which Christ continues to communicate for its edification; to forego all means of public edification, besides that in their parish churches, where, to speak with modesty, it is ofttimes scanty and wanting; to renounce all other assemblies wherein they have had great experience of spiritual advantage unto their souls; to desert the observation of many useful gospel duties, in their mutual watch that believers of the same church ought to have one over another; to divest themselves of all interest of a voluntary consent in the discipline of the church, and choice of their own pastors; and to submit unto an ecclesiastical rule and discipline, which not one in a thousand of them can apprehend to have any thing in it of the authority of Christ or rule of the gospel; and other things of the like nature may be added.

This being the true state of lay-communion, which will admit of no indulgence if the rule be observed, I must say,

that I do not believe that there are six nonconformist ministers in England that do believe this communion to be lawful for the people to embrace. And on the other hand, they cease not to instruct them wherein their true communion with the church of England doth consist, namely, in faith and love, and all the fruits of them unto the glory of God.

I heartily wish these things had been omitted, that they had not been spoken; not to cover any guilt in the nonconformists, whose consciences are unto them a thousand witnesses against such imputations: but whereas the ground of them is only surmises and suspicions, and the evil charged of the highest nature that any men can involve themselves in the guilt of, it argues such a frame of spirit, such a habit of mind, as evidenceth men to be very remote from that Christian love and charity, which on all hands we sometimes pretend unto. Of the same nature is another charge of the like want of sincerity, p. 46. 'Those,' saith he, 'who speak now most against the magistrate's power in matters of religion, had ten substantial reasons for it, when they thought the magistrates on their own side.' For which is quoted an answer unto two questions, 1659, that is, they change their opinions according to their interest. I know not directly whom he intends. Those who are commonly called Independents, expressed their apprehension of the magistrate's power in and about religion, in their confession made 1659. That any of them have, on what hath ensued, changed their opinion therein, I know not. And for my part, I have on this occasion perused the answer unto the two questions directed unto, and do profess myself at this day to be of the same judgment with the author of them, as it is expressed in that paper. There are things not easily to be numbered, wherein we acknowledge the magistrate's power and duty in matters of religion, as much as ever was in the godly kings of Judah of old, or was at first claimed by the first Christian emperors. Yet are there some who, although they are fed and warmed, promoted and dignified by the effects of the magistrate's power in and about religion, who will not allow that any thing is ascribed unto him, unless we grant that it is in his rightful power, and his duty, to coerce and punish with all sorts of mulcts, spoiling of goods, imprisonments, banishments, and in some cases death itself, such persons

as hold the head and all the fundamental principles of Christian religion entire, whose worship is free from idolatry, whose conversations are peaceable and useful, unless in all things they comply with themselves; when possibly some of them may be as useful in and unto the church of God, as those that would have them so dealt withal. And it may be common prudence would advise a forbearance of too much severity in charges on others for changing their opinions, lest a provocation unto a recrimination on them that make them should arise, of changing their opinions also, not without an appearing aspect to their own interests: but we have some among the nonconformists who are so accustomed not only unto such undue charges as that here insisted on, but unto such unjust accusations, false reports, malicious untruths, concerning them, their words, doctrine, and practices, which being invented by a few ill men, are trumpeted abroad with triumph by many, as that they are come to a resolution never to concern themselves in them any more.

2. As unto the state of the question we are told, 'That he speaks not of the separation or distinct communion of whole churches from each other, which, according to the Scripture, antiquity, and reason, have a just right and power to govern and reform themselves. By whole churches, I mean the churches of such nations, which upon the decay of the Roman empire, resumed their just right of government to themselves; and upon their owning Christianity, incorporated into one Christian society, under the same common ties and rules of order and government;' p. 16.

I do suppose that particular churches or congregations are hereby exempted from all guilt of schism, in not complying with rules of communion imposed on them by other churches; I am sure according unto the principles of nonconformists they are so. For they judge that particular or congregational churches stated with their officers according to the order of the gospel, are entire churches that have a just right and power to govern and reform themselves. Until this be disproved, until it be proved, either that they are not churches because they are congregational, or that although they are churches, yet they have not power to govern and reform themselves, they are free from the guilt of schism in their so doing.

But the reverend author seems in the ensuing discourse to appropriate this right and power unto national churches, whose rise he assigns unto the dissolution of the Roman empire, and the alteration of the church government, unto that of distinct kingdoms and provinces. But this is a thing that fell out so long after the institution of churches, and propagation of Christian religion, that we are not at all concerned in it; especially considering, that the occasion and means of the constitution of such churches, was wholly foreign unto religion, and the concerns of it.

The right and power of governing and reforming themselves here spoken of, is that which is given by Christ himself unto his churches; nor do I know else where they should have it. Wherefore those national provincial churches which arose upon the dissolution of the Roman empire, must first be proved to be of his institution, before they can be allowed to have their power given them by Jesus Christ. In what kings, potentates, and other supreme magistrates might do, to accommodate the outward profession of religion unto their rule, and the interest thereof, we are not at all concerned; nor will give interruption unto any of them, whilst they impose not the religious observation of their constitutions unto that end, upon our consciences and practice. Our sole inquiry is, what our Lord Jesus Christ hath ordained, and which if we are compliant withal, we shall fear neither this nor any other charge of the like nature.

But to give strength hereunto, it is added; 'Just as several families united make one kingdom, which at first had a distinct and independent power; but it would make strange confusion in the world, to reduce kingdoms back again to families, because at first they were made up of them;' p. 17. Which is again insisted on, p. 31. But the case is not the same. For if indeed God had appointed no other civil government in the world but that of families, I should not much oppose them who would endeavour peaceably to reduce all government thereunto. But whereas we are certain, that God, by the light of the law of nature, by the ends and use of the creation of man, and by express revelation in his word, hath by his own authority appointed and approved other sorts of civil government, in kingdoms

and commmon-weals, we esteem it not only a madness to endeavour a reduction of all government into families, as unto the possibility of the thing; but a direct opposition unto the authority, command, and institution of God. So if these national churches were of the immediate institution of Christ himself, we should no more plead the exemption of particular churches from any power given them by Christ, as such, than we do to exempt private families from the lawful government of public magistrates. And we must also add, that whatever be their original and constitution, if all their governors were as the apostles, yet have they no power but what is for edification, and not for destruction. If they do or shall appoint and impose on men what tends unto the destruction of their souls, and not unto their edification, as it is fallen out in the church of Rome; not only particular churches, but every individual believer is warranted to withdraw from their communion; and hereon we ground the lawfulness of our separation from the church of Rome, without any need of a retreat unto the late device of the power of provincial churches to reform themselves. Let none mistake themselves herein, believers are not made for churches, but churches are appointed for believers. Their edification, their guidance and direction in the profession of the faith and performance of divine worship in assemblies according to the mind of God, is their use and end; without which they are of no signification. The end of Christ in the constitution of his churches, was not the moulding of his disciples into such ecclesiastical shapes, as might be subservient unto the power, interest, advantages, and dignity of them that may in any season come to be over them; but to constitute a way and order of giving such officers unto them, as might be in all things useful and subservient unto their edification; as is expressly affirmed, Eph. iv. 11—14.

As it should seem, an opinion opposite unto this notion of national churches, is examined and confuted, p. 17. 'And it is a great mistake to make the notion of a church barely to relate to acts of worship; and consequently that the adequate notion of a church, is an assembly for divine worship; by which means they appropriate the name of churches to particular congregations. Whereas, if this hold true, the *church must be* dissolved as soon as the congregation is

broken up; but if they retain the nature of a church, when they do not meet together for worship, then there is some other bond that unites them; and whatever that is, it constitutes the church.' I am far from pretending to have read the writings of all men upon this subject; nay, I can say, I have read very few of them; though I never avoided the reading of any thing written against the way and order which I approve of. Wherefore there may be some, as far as I know, who have maintained this notion of a church, or that it is only an assembly for divine worship; but for my part I never read nor heard of any who was of this judgment. Assemblies for divine worship we account indispensably necessary for the edification of the churches; but that this is that which gives them their constitution and formeth that which is the bond of their union, none of the nonconformists, as I know of, do judge. For it will not only hence follow, as the reverend author observes, 'that the church is dissolved when the congregation is broken up' (on which account churches at this time would be dissolved almost every week whether they would or no); but that any sort of persons who have no church relation unto one another, meeting occasionally for divine worship, do constitute a church, which it may be within an hour, they cease to be. It is not therefore on this account that we appropriate the name of churches unto particular congregations; there is quite another way and means, another bond of union whereby particular churches are constituted; which hath been sufficiently declared. But if the meaning of the 'appropriating the name of churches' unto particular congregations be, that those societies which have not, or which cannot have, assemblies for divine worship are not churches properly so called, it is a thing of another consideration, that need not here be insisted on. But when such societies as whose bounds and limits are not of divine institution, as were those of the national church of the Jews; no nor yet of the prudence and wisdom of men, as were the distribution of the ancient church into patriarchates and diocesses; but a mere natural and necessary consequent of that prevailing sword, which on the dissolution of the Roman empire erected distinct kingdoms and dominions, as men were able; such societies as are not capable of any religious

emblies for divine worship, and the ministration of istian discipline in them; such as are forced to invent maintain a union by ways and means, and officers and ers, which the Scripture knows nothing of, are proved to churches of Christ's institution, I shall embrace them as : in the mean time let them pass at their own proper and value, which the stamp of civil authority hath put n them. What is farther discoursed by the author on subject, proceeding no farther but why may it not be nd so, we are not concerned in.

3. Pages 23, 24. there is a distribution of all dissenters two parties; (1.) Such as say, 'That although they are state of separation from our church, yet this separation o sin.' (2.) Such as say, 'That a state of separation ld be sin, but notwithstanding their meeting in different es, yet they are not in a state of separation.' The difnce of these two parties seems to me, to be only in the erent ways of expressing themselves, the one granting use of the word separation in this case, which others not admit. For their practice, so far as I can observe, ne and the same, and therefore their principles must be also, though they choose several ways of expressing n. Both sorts intended, do plead, that in sundry things have communion with the church of England, and in e things they have not, nor can have it so. Some know the word separation to be of an indifferent signification, to be determined as unto its sense by what it is applied o, do not contend but that if any will have it so, the e wherein they are, should be denominated from their ent unto those things wherein they cannot hold communion with the church of England; and so are not offended ou call it a state of separation; howbeit this hinders but that they continue their communion with the church England as was before mentioned. Others seem to take aration in the same sense with schism, which is always ; or at least they pretend it is their right to have the omination of their state taken from what they agree in h the church of England, and not from their dissent in er things from it. And therefore they continue in a ctice suitable unto that dissent Wherefore I judge that re is no need of this distinction, but both parties in-

tended are equally concerned in the charge that is laid against them for their dissent in some things from the church.

These things being premised, that we may not be diverted from the substance of the cause in hand, as they would otherwise occur unto us in our progress, I shall proceed unto the consideration of the charge itself laid against the nonconformists, and the arguings whereby it is endeavoured to be confirmed.

The charge is, 'That all the nonconformists of one sort or another, that is, Presbyterians and Independents, are guilty of sin, of a sinful separation from the church of England;' and therefore as they live in a known sin, so they are the cause thereby of great evils, confusion, disturbances among ourselves, and of danger unto the whole Protestant religion; whence it is meet, that they should, &c.

The matter of fact being thus far mutually acknowledged, that there is such a stated difference between the church of England and the nonconformists, the next inquiry naturally should be on these two heads:

1. Who or what is the cause of this difference or distance; without which we cannot judge aright, on whom the blame of it is to be charged? For that all men are not presently to be condemned for the withdrawing from the communion of any church, because they do so, without a due examination of the causes for which they do it, will be acknowledged by all Protestants. In plain terms, our inquiry is, Whether the cause hereof be on the one hand, the imposition of terms of communion without any obligation in conscience to make that imposition so much as pleaded or pretended from the nature of the things imposed; or the refusal of compliance with those impositions, under a profession that such a compliance would be against the light of conscience and the best understanding in them who so refuse, which they can attain of the mind and will of God in the Scripture.

2. Whereas the parties at difference do agree in all substantial parts of religion, and in a common interest as unto the preservation and defence of the Protestant religion, living alike peaceably under the same supreme authority and civil government; whether the evils and inconveni-

encies mentioned, are necessary and inseparable effects of such a difference; or whether they do not wholly owe themselves unto passions, corrupt affections, and carnal interests of men, which ought on all hands to be mortified and subdued. For as, it may be, few wise men who know the nature of conscience, how delicate and tender it is, what care is required in all men to keep it as a precious jewel, whose preservation from defilements and affronts, God hath committed unto us, under the pain of his eternal displeasure; how unable honest men are to contravene the light of their own minds, in things of the smallest importance, for any outward advantages whatever; how great care, diligence and accuracy ought to be used in all things relating unto the worship of God, about which he so frequently declares his jealousy, and displeasure against those who in any thing corrupt or debase it; with sundry other things of the like nature, will admire that these differences are not ended among us, by an absolute acquiescency of the one party in the judgments, dictates, and impositions of the other; so upon the supposition before mentioned, of an agreement in all the foundations of religion, in all things from themselves and God's appointment necessary unto salvation; of that union of affections, which our joint interest in the unity of the faith doth require, and of that union of interest which both parties have in the preservation of the Protestant religion, and that of obedience and subjection unto the same civil government; and on the satisfaction which the dissenting parties have, in that the other do enjoy all those great advantages which the public profession of religion in this kingdom is accompanied withal, not in the least pretending to or contending for any share therein; many wise men do and cannot but admire, that the inconveniencies and evils pretended should ensue on this difference as it is stated among us, and that the dissenters should be pursued with so much vehemency as they have been, even unto their ruin. But we must proceed in the way and method here proposed unto us.

1. The foundation whereon the reverend author manageth his charge of schism with all its consequents against the nonconformists, is taken from the words of his text, and declared, pp. 10—14. of his book. I shall not transcribe

his words, principally because I would not oblige myself to take notice of any thing that is ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος, which in such discourses do commonly administer occasion of unnecessary strife. The force of the argument unto the best of my understanding consists in the things that follow. (1.) That all churches and the members of them, by virtue of the apostolical precept contained in the text, ought to walk according unto rule. (2.) That the rule here intended is not the rule of charity and mutual forbearance in the things wherein they who agree in the foundation, are differently minded or otherwise than one another. But, (3.) This was a standing rule for agreement and uniformity in practice in church-order and worship, which the apostles had given and delivered unto them. (4.) That this rule they did not give only as apostles, but as governors of the church; as appears from Acts xv. (5.) Wherefore what the apostles so did, that any church hath power to do, and ought to do, namely, to establish a rule of all practice in their communion. (6.) That not to comply with this rule in all things is schism, the schism whereof nonconformists are guilty. This to the best of my understanding is the entire force of the argument insisted on, and that proposed unto the best advantage for the apprehension of its force and strength, &c.

Let us therefore hereon a little inquire, whether this will bear the weight of so great a charge as that which is built upon it and resolved into it, with all the dismal consequents pretended to ensue thereon; and we shall not pass by in so doing, any thing that is offered to give an especial enforcement unto the charge itself. But in our entrance into the consideration of these things, I must needs say, it is somewhat surprising unto me, to see a charge wherein the consciences, reputations, liberty, &c. of so many are concerned, founded on the exposition of a text, which no sober expositor, that I know of, did ever find out, propose, or embrace. But if it be true and according unto the mind of the Holy Ghost, this ought to be no disparagement unto it, though it be applied unto such an end. This is that which we are to examine. I say, therefore,

(1.) We no way doubt but that the apostles did give rules of faith, obedience, and worship, not only unto private Christians, but to whole churches also, which we find

recorded in the Scripture. Unto all these rules we do declare our assent and consent, with an entire conformity; and do hope that with indifferent unbiassed persons this is enough to free us from the charge of schism. (2.) For the rule here intended, some take it to be the rule of faith in general, or divine revelation; some to be the rule of charity and brotherly condescension; some to be the particular rule here laid down of walking together in the different measures of faith, light, and knowledge, which we do attain unto. The apostle in the foregoing verses having given an account of the glorious excellencies of the mysteries of the gospel, and of his own endeavour after the full attainment of them, yet affirms that he had not attained unto that perfection in the comprehension of them, which he designed and aimed at. Herein in the instance of himself he declares the condition of the best believers in this life, which is not a full measure and perfection in the comprehension of the truths of the gospel, or enjoyment of the things themselves contained in them. But withal he declares their duty in pressing continually by all means after that measure of attainment which is proposed unto their acquisition. Hereupon he supposes what will certainly ensue on the common pursuit of this design, which is, that men will come unto different attainments, have different measures of light and knowledge, yea, and different conceptions or opinions about these things; some will be otherwise minded than other some will be, in some things only. Hereupon he gives direction how they should walk, and behave themselves in this state and condition. And unto those who have attained that measure, whence in comparison of others they may be styled perfect, that they press on unanimously towards the end proposed. And as for those who in any things differed from others, he encourageth them to wait on the teachings of God, in that use of the means of instruction which they enjoyed. And having prescribed to each supposed party their especial duties as such, he lays down the duty of them both in common; which is, that in and with respect unto what they had attained, they should 'walk by the same rule,' namely, which he had now laid down, and 'mind the same things' as he had before enjoined them. Wherefore these words of the apostle are so far from being

a foundation to charge them with schism who agreeing in the substance of the doctrine of the gospel, do yet dissent from others (probably the greater part of the church are intended) in some things; that it enjoins a mutual forbearance among those who are so differently minded. (4.) But our author affirms that it cannot be a rule of charity and mutual forbearance that is intended, because the apostle had spoken of that just before. But it is apparent that he speaks these words, with reference unto what he had said just before; and if this be that which those who are otherwise minded are not obliged unto, then are they not obliged at all to walk by the rule intended, which is not the mind of the apostle; so himself declares out of Cajetan, that 'the apostle subjoins the last words to the former, lest the persons he there speaks unto should think themselves excused from going as far as they can in the same rule;' p. 37.

But 'a rule,' he says, 'it is limiting and determining the practice, requiring uniformity in observing the same standing rule.' The nonconformists hereon do say, that if the apostles, or any one apostle, did appoint such a rule as this intended, let it be produced with any probability of proof to be theirs, and they are all ready to subscribe and conform unto it. On supposition that any rule of this nature was appointed by the apostles, and declared unto the churches, as the reverend author I suppose doth intimate that it was (though I dare not affix a determinate sense unto his words in this place), all that can be required of us, is that we do conform, and walk according unto that rule, so appointed and declared by them. This we are always ready to do. Sundry general rules we find in the Scripture given unto us, relating unto the constitution and edification of churches, to their order and worship, and government; sundry particular rules for ministers and others, how they should behave themselves in church societies and assemblies, are also laid down therein; all which we embrace and submit unto the authority of Christ in them. And if any other government or particular rule can be produced, given by them, which is not recorded in the Scripture, so it can be proved to be theirs, we will engage to conform unto it.

(5.) If the rule pretended to be given by the apostle be of any use in this case, or can give any force unto the argu-

ment in hand, it must be such a one as appointed and required things to be observed in the worship of God that were never divinely appointed, imposing the observation of them on the consciences and practices of all members of the church, under penalties spiritual and temporal; a rule constituting national churches, with a government and discipline suited unto that constitution; with modes and ceremonies of worship nowhere intimated in the Scripture, nor any way necessary in the light of reason. Such a rule, I say, it must be; since although I should grant (which yet I do not), that the consequent is good, that because the apostles made rules for the practice of the church that believers were bound in conscience to submit unto, therefore other ordinary governors of the church may do so also; yet it will by no means follow that because the apostles appointed a rule of one sort, present church governors may appoint those of another. We know full well, and it is on all hands agreed, what is the rule that our conformity is required unto. If this be done from any rule given by the apostles, it must be a rule of the same nature or to the same purpose; otherwise, by a pretence of their pattern or example, rules may be made directly contrary unto and destructive of all the rules they ever really gave, as it is actually fallen out in the church of Rome. But,

(6.) We deny that the apostles made or gave any such rules to the churches present in their days; or for the use of the churches in future ages, as should appoint and determine outward modes of worship, with ceremonies in their observation; stated feasts and fasts, beyond what is of divine institution, liturgies or forms of prayer, or discipline to be exercised in law courts, subservient unto a national ecclesiastical government. What use then they are or may be of, what benefit or advantage may come to the church by them, what is the authority of the superior magistrate about them, we do not now inquire or determine. Only we say, that no rule unto these ends was ever prescribed by the apostles. For,

(1.) There is not the least intimation of any such rule to be given by them in the Scripture. There are in it, as was before observed, many express rules both general and particular, *about churches*, their faith, worship, and men's walk-

ing in them, thoroughly sufficient to direct the duty and practice of all believers in all cases and occurrences relating to them. But of any such rule as that here pretended, there is no mention; which certainly if it had been given, and of the importance which now it is pleaded to be of, such as that without it neither peace, nor unity, nor order can be preserved in churches, some intimation at least would have been made of it therein. Especially we may judge it would have been so, seeing sundry things (every thing so far as we can understand) wherein the edification of the church is any way concerned, are recorded in it, though of little or no use in comparison of what so great and general a rule would be of. Besides, there is that doctrine delivered, and those directions given by them in the Scripture, concerning the liberty of believers and forbearance of dissenters, as is inconsistent with such a rule and the imposition of it.

(2.) The first churches after their times knew nothing of any such rule given by them, and therefore after they began to depart from the simplicity of the gospel in any things, as unto worship, order and rule, or discipline, they fell into a great variety of outward observances, orders, and ceremonies, every church almost differing in some thing or other from others, in some such observations; yet all keeping 'the unity of the faith in the bond of peace.' This they would not have done if the apostles had prescribed any one certain rule of such things that all must conform unto, especially considering how scrupulously they did adhere unto every thing that was reported to be done or spoken by any of the apostles, were the report true or false.

(3.) In particular, when a difference fell out amongst them, in a business of this nature, namely, in a thing of outward order, nowhere appointed by the authority of Christ, namely, about the observation of Easter, the parties at variance appealed on the one side to the practice of Peter, on the other to the practice of John; both vainly enough; yet was it never pretended by any of them on either side, that the apostles had constituted any rule in the case; and therefore is it not probable that they esteemed them to have done so in things of an alike nature, seeing they laid more weight on this, than on any other instance of the like kind.

(4.) It is expressly denied by good and sufficient tes-

tinority among them, that the apostles made any law or rule about outward rites, ceremonies, times, and the like. See Socrat. lib. 5. cap. 21.

However then the apostles might, by their epistles and presence with the churches, reform abuses that were creeping or crept in among them, and set things in order among them, with renewed directions for their walking; and that all Christians were obliged unto the observation of those rules, as all those still are unto whom they are applicable in their circumstances; yet all this proves nothing of their appointing such a general rule as is pretended, and such a rule alone would be pleadable in this case; and yet not this neither, until either it were produced in a scheme of canons, or it were proved because they had power to make such a rule, so others may do the like, adding unto what they prescribed, leaving place unto others to add to their rule by the same right, and so endlessly.

The truth is, if God would be pleased to help us on all hands to lay aside prejudices, passions, secular interests, fears, and every other distempered affection, which obstruct our minds in passing a right judgment on things of the nature treated on; we find in the text and context spoken unto, a sacred truth divinely directive of such a practice as would give peace and rest unto us all. For it is supposed that men in a sincere endeavour after acquaintance with the truths and mysteries of the gospel, with an enjoyment of the good things represented and exhibited in them, may fall in some things, into different apprehensions about what belongs unto faith and practice in religion. But whilst they are such as do not destroy nor overthrow the foundation, nor hinder men from 'pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' that which the apostle directs unto them, who are supposed to be ignorant of, or to mistake in the things wherein they do differ from others; is only that they wait for divine instruction in the use of the means appointed for that end, practising in the mean time according to what they have received. And as unto both parties the advice he gives them is, that 'whereunto they have attained,' wherein they do agree, which were all those principles of faith and obedience which were necessary unto their acceptance with *God, they should* 'walk by the same rule, and mind the

same things;' that is, 'forbearing one another' in the things wherein they differ; which is the substance of what is pleaded for by the nonconformists.

And that this is the meaning and intention of the apostle in this place, is evident from the prescription of the same rules in an alike case, Rom. xiv. This the reverend author saw, namely, that the rule there laid down, is such as expressly requires mutual forbearance in such cases, where men are unsatisfied in conscience about any practice in religion; which seems in the same case to be quite another rule, than that which he supposeth to be intended in this place to the Philippians. But hereunto he answers, 'That the apostle did act like a prudent governor, and in such a manner, as he thought did most tend to the propagation of the gospel, and the good of particular churches. In some churches that consisted most of Jews, as the church of Rome at this time did, and where they did not impose the necessity of keeping of the law on the Gentile Christians (as we do not find they did at Rome), the apostle was willing to have the law buried as decently, and with as little noise as might be; and therefore in this case he persuades both parties to forbearance and charity, in avoiding the judging and censuring one another, since they had an equal regard unto the honour of God in what they did. But in those churches where the false apostles made use of this pretence, of the Levitical law being still in force, to divide the churches and to separate the communion of Christians; these the apostle bids them beware of them and their practices, as being of a dangerous and pernicious consequence;' pp. 14, 15. (1.) No man ever doubted of the prudence of the apostle as a governor, though in this place he acts only as a teacher divinely inspired, instructing the churches in the mind of God, as unto the differences that were among them. (2.) The difference then among the Romans was about the observation of the Mosaical ceremonies and worship, that is, so far as they might be observed, in the countries of the Gentiles out of the limits of the church, the land of Canaan. It could not be therefore concerning such things as whose discharge and practice was confined unto the temple or that land, which yet the Jews of Jerusalem adhered unto; Acts xx. 21—24. Their controversy therefore was principally about meats and drinks, days of feast-

ing or fasting, and the like; all founded in a supposed necessity of circumcision. (3.) It is well observed by our author that the Judaizing Christians (which in all probability at this time were the greatest number at Rome, the Gentile church not making any great increase before the coming of the apostle thither) did not impose the necessity of keeping the law on the Gentile Christians, at least not in that manner as was done by the false teachers, who troubled the churches of the Galatians and others, so as to reject them who complied not with them out of church-communion, and from all hopes of salvation. But yet both parties continued in their different practices, which through want of instruction what was their duty in such cases, produced many inconveniencies among them; as judging or despising one another, contrary to the rule of Christian love and charity. In this state the apostle prescribes unto them the rule of their duty; which is plainly, to bear with one another, to love one another, and according to the nature of charity to believe all things, to believe that each party was accepted with God, whilst they served him according unto the light which they had received. And as it is to be thought that upon the giving of this rule and direction, they utterly laid aside all the animosities in judging and despising one another, which they had been guilty of; so it is certain that they continued in their different practice a long time after without any rebuke or reproof. Yea, some learned men do judge, and that not on grounds to be despised, that the parties who differed were gathered into distinct churches, and so continued to walk, even to the days of Adrian the emperor, when the last and final destruction of the whole nation of the Jews did befall them; after which, those who were not hardened to the utmost, gave off all expectation of any respect to be had with God, of their old institutions.

I do not know how the present case between the church of England and the nonconformists, could have possibly been more plainly and distinctly stated and exemplified in any thing that the churches were capable of or liable unto in those days, than it is in this case here stated and determined by the apostle; in whose direction, rule, and determination we do fully acquiesce. But, (4.) It is true also *which this reverend* author observes, that when the false *apostles, or any other* Judaizing teachers pretending to au-

thority, did impose the observation of the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical law on any churches unto their disturbance and division; the apostle looks hereon, as that which so far altered the case, that he gives other rules and directions about it. And if such impositions might be put forhorn in the like case, especially as accompanied with the severe supplement and addition of all sorts of outward penalties to be inflicted on them who cannot comply with them, an open door would appear into all that agreement, peace, and quietness among us, which are desired.

I have treated thus far of these things, not to manage a controversy with this author, or any other, but only to shew that there is no ground to be taken from this text or its context, to give countenance unto the severe censure of schism and all the evil consequents of it, as maintained by ill arts and practices, upon the nonconformists.

The procedure of our author in the management of his charge, is in a way of proving from the assertions and concessions of the several parties whereinto he hath distinguished nonconformists, that they have no just cause to withhold full communion from the church of England, especially in its parochial assemblies. And as unto the first party whom he affirms to grant that they are in a state of separation, he quotes some sayings out of a discourse of a nameless author, concerning Evangelical Love, Church-Peace, and Unity. And together with some concessions of his, he adds his judgment, that communion in ordinances must be only in such churches as Christ himself instituted by unalterable rules, which were only particular and congregational churches. As I remember, that author hath at large declared in his discourse, what communion believers ought to have with the church, or all churches, the church in every sense wherein that name is used in the Scripture. But I shall not trouble myself to inquire into his assertions or concessions; nor at present can I do so, not having that book with me where I now am. My business is only to examine on this occasion what this reverend author excepteth against, or opposeth unto his assertion about congregational churches, and the answering his charge of schism, notwithstanding this plea of the institution of particular churches for the celebration of divine ordinances. This he doth p. 25. 'Granting this to be true, how doth

it hence appear not to be a sin to separate from our parochial churches; which, according to their own concessions, have all the essentials of true churches? And what ground can they have to separate and divide those churches, which for all that we can see, are of the same nature with the churches planted by the apostles at Corinth, Philippi, or Thessalonica?'

Ans. (1.) We will allow at present that the parochial churches, at least some of them in this nation, are true churches; that is, that they are not guilty of any such heinous errors in doctrine or idolatrous practice in worship, as should utterly deprive them of the being and nature of churches. Yet we suppose it will not be made a rule, that communion may not be withheld or withdrawn from any church in any thing, so long as it continues as unto the essence of it to be so. This author knows that testimonies may be produced out of very learned Protestant writers to the contrary.

(2.) We do not say, it is not pleaded, that because communion in ordinances must be only in such churches as Christ himself hath instituted, &c. that therefore it is lawful and necessary to separate from parochial churches; but it may be pleaded thence, that if it be on other grounds necessary to so separate or withhold communion from them; it is the duty of them who do so, to join themselves in or unto some other particular congregations.

The reasons why the nonconformists cannot join in that communion with those parochial churches which were before described, are quite of another nature, which are not here to be pleaded; however some of them may be mentioned, to deliver us from this mistake, that the ground of separation from them, is the institution of particular congregational churches. And they are such as these:

1. There are many things in all parochial churches that openly stand in need of reformation. What these are both with respect unto persons and things, hath been before intimated, and shall be farther declared if occasion require. But these parochial churches neither do, nor indeed can, nor have power in themselves to reform the things that ought by the rule of the Scripture to be reformed. For none among us will plead, that they are intrusted with power for their own government and reformation.

In this case we judge it lawful for any man peaceably

to withdraw communion from such churches, to provide for his own edification in others.

2. That there are many things in the constant total communion of parochial churches imposed on the consciences and practices of men, which are not according to the mind of Christ. The things of this nature I shall not here mention in particular.

3. There is no evangelical church discipline administered in such parochial churches, which yet is a necessary means unto the edification of the churches appointed by Christ himself, and sacredly attended unto by the primitive churches. And we dare not renounce our interest in so blessed an ordinance of Christ in the gospel.

4. The rule and government which such parochial churches are absolutely under, in the room of that rule and discipline which ought to be in and among themselves, namely, that by the courts of bishops, chancellors, commissaries, &c. is unknown to the Scriptures, and in its administration is very remote from giving a true representation of the authority, wisdom, love, and care of Christ to his church; which is the sole end of all church rules and discipline. The yoke hereof many account themselves not obliged to submit unto.

5. There is in such churches a total deprivation of the liberty of the people secured unto them by the rules and practices of several ages from the beginning, of choosing their own pastors; whereby they are also deprived of all use of their light and knowledge of the gospel, in providing for their own edification.

6. It cannot be denied, but that there is want of due means of edification in many of those parochial churches, and yet provision is made by the government that those churches are under, that none shall by any way provide themselves of better means, for that great end of all church society.

It is on these and the like reasons that the nonconformists cannot join in total communion such as the rule pleaded for requireth, with parochial churches. In this state, as was said, the Lord Christ having instituted particular congregations requiring all believers to walk in them; it is the *duty* of those who are necessitated to decline the *communion of* parochial churches, as they are stated at present, to

join themselves in and unto such congregations, as wherein their edification and liberty may be better provided for according unto rule.

But hereon the reverend author proceeds to oppose such particular congregations or churches, I think, as unto their original and necessity; for so he speaks, pp. 25, 26. 'But I must needs say farther, I have never yet seen any tolerable proof, that the churches planted by the apostles were limited to congregations.' Howbeit this seems to be so clear and evident in matter of fact, and so necessary from the nature of the thing itself, that many wise men, wholly unconcerned in our controversies, do take it for a thing to be granted by all without dispute. So speaks chief justice Hobart, p. 149. in the case of Colt and Glover cont. bishop Coventry and Litchfield. 'And we know well that the primitive church in its greatest purity, was but voluntary congregations of believers, submitting themselves to the apostles, and after to other pastors, to whom they did minister of their temporals as God did move them.' Of the same judgment are those who esteemed the first government of the church to be democratical. So speaks Paulus Sharpius, 'In the beginning the government of the holy church had altogether a democratical form, all the faithful intervening in the chiefest deliberations; thus we see that all did intervene at the election of Matthias unto the apostleship, and in the election of the six deacons; and when St. Peter received Cornelius, a heathen centurion, unto the faith, he gave an account of it to all the church: likewise in the council celebrated in Jerusalem, the apostles, the priests, and the other faithful brethren, did intervene, and the letters were written in the name of all these three orders. In success of time, when the church increased in number, the faithful retiring themselves to the affairs of their families, and having left those of the congregation, the government retained only in the ministers, and became aristocratical, saving the election which was popular.' And others also of the same judgment may be added.

But let us hear the reasoning of this learned author against this apprehension; this he enters upon, p. 26. 'It is possible, at first, there might be no more Christians in one city than could meet in one assembly for worship; but *where doth it* appear, that when they multiplied into more

congregations, they did make new and distinct churches, under new officers, with a separate power of government? Of this, I am well assured, there is no marks nor footsteps in the New Testament, or the whole history of the primitive church. I do not think it will appear credible to any considerate man, that the five thousand Christians in the church of Jerusalem made one stated and fixed congregation for divine worship; not if we make all the allowances for strangers which can be desired: but if this were granted, where are the unalterable rules that as soon as the company became too great for one particular assembly, they must become a new church under peculiar officers and an independent authority? It is very strange that those who contend so much for the Scripture's being a perfect rule of all things pertaining to worship and discipline, should be able to produce nothing in so necessary a point.'

I answer, (1.) It is possible that an impartial account may ere long be given of the state and ways of the first churches after the decease of the apostles; wherein it will be made to appear how they did insensibly deviate in many things from the rule of their first institution; so as that though their mistakes were of small moment, and not prejudicial unto their faith and order, yet occasion was administered to succeeding ages to increase those deviations until they issued in a fatal apostacy. An eminent instance hereof is given us in the discourse of Paulus Sharpius about matters beneficiary, lately made public in our own language.

(2.) The matter of fact herein seems to me evidently to be exemplified in the Scripture. For although it may be there is not express mention made that these or those particular churches did divide themselves into more congregations with new officers; yet are there instances of the erection of new particular congregations in the same province, as distinct churches with a separate power of government. So the first church in the province of Judea was in Jerusalem; but when that church was complete, as to the number of them who might communicate therein unto their edification, the apostle did not add the believers of the adjacent towns and places unto that church, but erected other particular congregations all the country over: so there were different churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; that is, many in each of them; Acts ix. 31. So the apostle mentions the

'churches of God that were in Judea,' 1 Thess. ii. 14. and nowhere speaks of them as one church, for worship, order, and government. So he speaks again, that is constantly, Gal. i. 22. 'I was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea.' And that these churches were neither national nor diocesan, but particular congregations, is, as I suppose, sufficiently evident. So was it in the province of Galatia; there is no mention of any church therein, that should be comprehensive of all the believers in that province. But many particular churches there were, as it is testified chap. i. 2. So was it also in Macedonia, the first church planted in that province was at Philippi, as it is declared Acts xvi. And it was quickly brought into complete order, so as that when the apostle wrote unto it, there were in it the saints whereof it was constituted, with 'bishops and deacons;' Phil. i. 1. But that church being so complete, the apostle appointed other particular congregational churches, in the same province, who had officers of their own, with a power of government; these he mentions and calls the 'churches of Macedonia;' 2 Cor. viii. 1. 23. Wherefore we need no more directions in this matter, than what are given us by the apostle's authority in the name and authority of Jesus Christ; nor are concerned in the practice of those who afterward took another course, of adding believers from other places unto the church first planted, unless it were in case of a disability to enjoy church-communion among themselves elsewhere. Whatever therefore is pretended unto the contrary, we have plain Scripture evidence and practice, for the erecting particular distinct congregations, with power for their own rule and edification, in the same province, be it as small as those that were of Samaria or Galilee. It cannot surely be said that these churches were national, whereof there were many in one small province of a small nation, nor yet metropolitical or diocesan; nor I suppose will it be denied but that they were intrusted with power to rule and govern themselves in all ordinary cases; especially when in every one of them, elders were ordained, which the apostles were careful to see done; Acts xiv. 22. This is the substance of what we plead as unto particular congregations.

(3.) It is not probable, that any of the first churches did *for a long time increase* in any city unto such a number, as

might exceed the bounds of a particular church or congregation. For such they might continue to be, notwithstanding a multiplication of bishops or elders in them, and occasional distinct assemblies for some acts of divine worship. And it seems if they did begin to exceed in number beyond a just proportion for their edification, they did immediately erect other churches among them or near them. So whereas there was a mighty increase of believers at Corinth, Acts xviii. 10. there was quickly planted a distinct church at Cenchrea, which was the port of the city; Rom. xvi. 1. And notwithstanding the great number of five thousand that were converted at Jerusalem, upon the first preaching of the gospel; yet were they so disposed of or so dispersed, that some years after this there was such a church only there, as did meet together in one place as occasion did require, even the whole multitude of the brethren, who are called the church, in distinction from the apostles and elders who were their governors; Acts xv. 4. 12. xxi. 22. Nor was that church of any greater number, when they all departed afterward, and went out unto Pella, a village beyond Jordan, before the destruction of the people, city, and temple. And though many alterations were before that time introduced into the order and rule of the churches, yet it appears that when Cyprian was bishop of the church at Carthage, that the whole community of the members of that church did meet together to determine of things that were for their common interests, according unto what was judged to be their right and liberty in those days; which they could not have done, had they not all of them belonged unto the same particular church and congregation. But these things may be pleaded elsewhere if occasion be given thereunto. But yet,

(4.) I must say, that I cannot discern the least necessity of any positive rule or direction in this matter, nor is any such thing required by us on the like occasion. For this distribution of believers into particular congregations, is that which the nature of the thing itself, and the duty of men with respect unto the end of such churches, doth indispensably require. For what is the end of all churches for which they are instituted? Is it not the edification of them that do believe? They will find themselves mistaken, who suppose that they were designed to be subservient unto the secular interest of any sort of men. What are the

means appointed of Christ in such churches for that end? Are they not 'doctrines and fellowship, breaking bread and prayer,' that is, the joint celebration of the ordinances of Christ in the gospel, in preaching the word, administering the sacraments, mutual watchfulness over one another, and the exercise of that discipline which he hath appointed unto his disciples? I desire to know whether there be any need of a new revelation to direct men who are obliged to preserve churches in their use unto their proper end, to take care of such things, as would obstruct and hinder them in the use of means unto that end of their edification? Whereas, therefore, it is manifest that ordinarily these means cannot be used in a due manner, but in such churches as wherein all may be acquainted with what all are concerned in, the very institution itself is a plain command, to plant, erect, and keep all churches in such a state, as wherein this end may be attained. And therefore, if believers in any place are so few, or so destitute of spiritual gifts, as not to be able of themselves jointly to observe these means for their edification; it is their duty not to join by themselves in a church-state, but to add themselves as members unto other churches; and so when they are so many as that they cannot orderly communicate together in all these ordinances, in the way of their administration appointed in the Scripture unto the edification of them, it is their duty, by virtue of the divine institution of churches, to dispose of their church-state and relation into that way which will answer the ends of it; that is, unto more particular churches or congregations.

I speak not these things in opposition unto any other church-state, which men may erect or establish out of an opinion of its usefulness and conveniency; much less against that communion which ought to be among those particular churches, or their associations for their common rule and government in and by their officers; but only to manifest, that those nonconformists, which are supposed to adhere unto the institution of particular churches in a peculiar way, do not thereby deserve the imputation of so great and intolerable a guilt as they are here charged withal. And whereas I have hereby discharged all that I designed with respect unto the first sort of nonconformists, as they are *here distinguished*, I might here give over the pursuit of

this argument. But because I seek after truth and satisfaction also in these things, I shall a little farther consider what is offered by this reverend author unto the same purpose with what we have passed through. So therefore he proceeds, pp. 26, 27. 'If that of which we read the clearest instances in Scripture, must be the standard of all future ages, much more might be said for limiting churches to private families, than to particular congregations. For do we not read of the church that was in the house of Priscilla and Aquila at Rome; of the church that was of the house of Nymphas at Colosse; and in the house of Philemon at Laodicea? Why then should not churches be reduced to particular families, when by that means they may fully enjoy the liberty of their consciences, and avoid the scandal of breaking the laws? But if notwithstanding such plain examples, men will extend churches to congregations of many families; why may not others extend churches to those societies which consist of many congregations?'

I answer, (1.) Possibly a church may be in a family, or consist only of the persons that belong to a family. But a family, as a family, neither is nor can be a church. For as such it is constituted by natural and civil relations. But a church hath its form and being from the voluntary spiritual consent of those whereof it consists, unto church-order: they gave, saith the apostle, 'their ownselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God;' 2 Cor. viii. 5. Neither is there any mention at all in the Scripture of the constitution of churches in private families, so as that they should be limited thereunto.

(2.) What is spoken of the church in the house of Aquila, Nymphas, and Philemon, doth not at all prove that there was a particular church in each of their houses, consisting only of their own families, as such; but only that there was a church which usually assembled in their respective houses. Wherefore,

(3.) Here is no such example given of churches in private families in the whole Scripture, as should restrain the extent of churches from congregations of many families. And the inquiry hereon, that 'if men will extend churches to congregations of many families, why may not others extend churches unto societies which consist of many congregations,' hath not any force in it. For they who extended

churches unto congregations of many families, were the apostles themselves, acting in the name and authority of Jesus Christ. It cannot be proved that ever they stated, erected, or planted any one church, but it was composed of persons out of many families; nor that ever they confined a church unto a family; or taught, that families, though all of them believers and baptized, were churches on the account of their being families. So others may extend churches unto those societies which consist of many congregations; yet not so, as those who cannot comply or join with them, should thereon be esteemed schismatics; seeing such societies were not appointed by Christ and his apostles. If such societies be so constituted, as that there is but a probable plea that they are ordained by Christ; there may be danger in a dissent from them, merely on this account, that they consist of many congregations; but this is not our case, as hath been before declared.

The remainder of this section consists in an account of the practice of the churches in some things in following ages. This though of importance in itself, and deserving a full inquiry into, yet belongeth not unto our present case; and will, it may be, in due time be more fully spoken unto.

Those supposed of the first way and judgment, who grant a separation from the established form of the church of England, are dismissed with one charge more on, and plea against, their practice, not without a mixture of some severity in expression; p. 30. 'But suppose the first churches were barely congregated, by reason of the small number of believers at that time, yet what obligation lies upon us to disturb the peace of the church we live in, to reduce churches to their infant state?' Which is pressed with sundry considerations in the two following pages. But we say, (1.) That the first churches were not congregated by reason of the small number of believers, but because the Lord Christ had limited and determined, that such a state of his churches should be under the New Testament, as best suited unto all the ends of their institution. (2.) That which is called the infant state of churches, was in truth their sole perfect estate; what they grew up unto afterward, most of them, we know well enough. For leaving, as it is called, their infant state by degrees, they brought forth at last the *man of sin*. (3.) No obligation lies upon us from hence

to disturb the peace of any church; nor do we do so, let what will be pretended to the contrary. If any such disturbance do ensue upon the differences that are between them and us, as far as I know the blame will be found lying upon them, who not being satisfied that they may leave the first state of the churches under a pretence of its infancy, and bring them into a greater perfection than was given them by Christ and his disciples; but compel others also to forego their primitive constitution, and comply with them in their alteration thereof.

The remainder of the discourse of this section, so far as I can understand, proceeds on this principle, that the sole reason and cause of our nonconformity, is this persuasion of the divine institution of particular churches; but all men know that this is otherwise. This of all things is least pleaded, and commonly in the last place, and but by some. among the causes and reasons of our withholding communion, so far as we do so, from the church of England, as unto the way and manner wherein it is required of us. Those reasons have been pleaded already, and may yet be so farther, in due time. For the rest of the discourse, we do not. we cannot believe, that the due and peaceable observation of the institutions of Christ, doth of itself give any disturbance unto any churches or persons whatever; nor that a peaceable endeavour to practise ourselves according unto those institutions, without imposing that practice on them, can be justly blameable; we do not, we cannot believe, that our refusal of a total compliance with a rule for order, discipline, worship, and ceremonies in the church, not given by Christ and his apostles, but requiring of us sundry things either in themselves, or, as required of us, directly contrary unto or inconsistent with the rules and directions given us by them unto those ends (as in our judgment and light of our consciences is done in and by this rule), is either schism or blameable separation. We do judge ourselves obliged to preserve peace and unity among Christians, by all the means that Christ hath appointed for that end, by the exercise of all grace, the performance of all duties, the observation of all rules and directions given us for that end; but we do not, we cannot believe, that to neglect the means of our own edification, appointed unto us by Christ himself, to cast away the liberty wherewith he hath made us free,

and to destroy our own souls for ever, by acting against his authority in his word, and our own consciences guided thereby, in a total complying with the rule proposed unto us, is a way or means for the attaining of that end. And we do believe that in the present state of the differences among us, an issue whereof is not suddenly to be expected in an absolute agreement in opinion and judgment about them, that the rule of the Scripture, the example of the first churches, the nature of Christian religion, and the present interest of the Protestant religion among us, doth call for mutual forbearance, with mutual love, and peaceable walking therein. And we begin to hope, that whereas it is confessed that the foundations of Christian religion are preserved entire among us all; and it is evident that those who dissent from the present ecclesiastical establishments, or any of them, are as ready to do and suffer what they shall be lawfully called unto, in the defence and for the preservation of the Protestant religion; wise men will begin to think that it is better for them, to take up quietly in what the law hath provided for them, and not turmoil themselves and others, in seeking to put an end unto these differences by force and compulsion, which by these ways they will never whilst they live attain unto. And we do suppose that many of them who do cordially own and seek the preservation of the Protestant religion in this nation; men I mean of authority, power, and interest, will be no more instrumental to help one party ruin and destroy another, unduly weakening the whole interest of protestantism thereby; but considering how little the concern of themselves, or their posterity can be in these lesser differences, in comparison of what it is in the whole Protestant cause, will endeavour their utmost to procure an equal liberty (though not equal outward advantages) for all that are firm and stable in their profession of that Protestant religion which is established by law in this kingdom. I know that learned and eloquent men, such as this author is, are able to declaim against mutual forbearance in these things, with probable pleas and pretences of evil consequents which will ensue thereon. And I do know that others, though not with equal learning or eloquence, do declare and set forth the inequality, unrighteousness, and destructive events of a contrary course, *or the use of force* and compulsion in this cause. But it

must be granted that the evil consequences pretended on a mutual forbearance, do follow from the corrupt affections and passions of men, and not from the thing itself; but all the evils which will follow on force and compulsion, do naturally arise from the thing itself.

I shall close this part of my discourse with an observation on that wherewith it is closed by this author, in his management of it. Saith he, 'To withdraw from each other into separate congregations, tempts some to spiritual pride, and scorn and contempt of others, as of a more carnal and worldly church than themselves; and provokes others to lay open the follies and indiscretions and immoralities of those who pretend to so much purity and spirituality above their brethren;' pp. 32, 33. If there be any unto whom this is such a temptation as is mentioned in the first place, and being so, doth prevail upon them; it is their sin, arising from their own lusts, by which every man is tempted, and is not at all occasioned by the thing itself; and for the other part, let those who delight in that work proceed as they shall see cause. For if they charge upon us things that are really foolish, indiscreet, and immoral, as in many things we sin all, we hope we shall learn what to amend, and to be diligent therein, as for other reasons, so because of our observers. But if they do what some have done, and others yet continue to do, fill their discourses with false malicious defamations, with scorn, contempt, railing, and revilings, scandalous unto Christian religion; like a sermon lately preached before my Lord Mayor, and since put in print (I intend not that under consideration), we are no way concerned in what they do or say; nor do, as we know of, suffer any disadvantage thereby; yea, such persons are beneath the offence and contempt of all men, pretending unto the least wisdom and sobriety.

For what remains of this discourse, I esteem not myself concerned to insist on the examination of it. For I would not so express my judgment in these things, as some are here represented to declare themselves. And I know that those who are principally reflected on, are able to defend both their principles and practices. And besides I hear (in the retirement wherein I live, and wherein I die daily), that some of those most immediately concerned, have returned an answer, unto this part of the discourse under

consideration. I shall therefore only observe some few things that may abate the edge of this charge. For although we judge the defence of the truth which we profess to be necessary when we are called thereunto; yet, at present, for the reasons intimated at the entrance of this discourse, we should choose that it might not be brought under debate. But the defence of our innocency, when the charge against us is such as in itself tends to our distress and ruin, is that alone which is our present design; and which wise men, no way concerned in our nonconformity, for the sake of Protestant religion and public peace of the nation, have judged necessary.

The principal strength of this part of the reverend author's discourse, consists in his application of the reasons of the assembly against those who desired forbearance in distinct communion from the rule sought then to be established, unto those who now desire the same forbearance from the church of England. I will not immerse myself in that controversy; nor have any contention with the dead. This only I say, that the case then between the Presbyterians and those who dissented from them, is so vastly different from that now between the church of England and the nonconformists, and that in so many material instances and circumstances, that no light can be communicated unto the right determination of the latter, from what was pleaded in the former. In brief, those who pleaded then for a kind of uniformity or agreement in total communion, did propose no one of those things, as the condition of it, which are now pleaded as the only reasons of withholding the same kind of conformity from the church of England; and the nonimposition of any such things, they made the foundation of their plea for the compliance of others with them. And those on the other side, who pleaded for liberty and forbearance in such a case as wherein there were no such impositions, did it mostly on the common liberty which, as they judged, they had with their other brethren, to abide by the way which they had declared and practised, long before any rule was established unto its prejudice. And these things are sufficient to give us, as unto the present case under debate, an absolute unconcernment in what was then pleaded on the one side or the other; and so it shall be *here dismissed*.

The especial charge here managed against the nonconformists is, that they allow that to 'live a state of separation from such churches, as many at least of ours are, is a sin;' yet that themselves so do, which is manifest in their practice. But it may be said, (1.) That this concession respects only parochial churches, and that some of them only. But the conformity in general required of us, respects the constitution, government, discipline, worship, and communion of the national church and diocesan churches therein. (2.) Persons who thus express themselves are to be allowed the interpretation of their own minds, words, and expressions. For if they do judge that such things do belong unto a state of separation from any churches, as namely, a causeless renouncing of all communion with them; a condemnation of them as no church, and on that ground setting up churches against them, which they know themselves not to be guilty of, they may both honestly and wisely deny themselves to be in a state of separation, nor will their present practice prove them so to be. And on the other hand, those who do acknowledge a separation as unto distinct local presential communion with the church of England, yet do all of them deny those things, which in the judgment of those now intended, are necessary to constitute a state of separation. But on this account, I cannot see the least contradiction between the principles and practice of these brethren, nor wherein they are blame-worthy in their concessions, unless to be in too much earnestness to keep up all possible communion with the church of England: 'forgive them that wrong.' Yet I say not this, as though these who are here supposed to own a state of separation, were not as zealous also for communion in faith, love, and doctrine of truth with the body of Protestants in this nation, as they are. (3.) That which animates this part of the discourse, and which is the edge of this charge is, that 'the ministers do conceal from the people what their judgment is about the lawfulness of communion with the church of England.' How this can be known to be so, I cannot understand; for that it is their judgment that they may do so, is proved only, so far as I know, from what they have written and published in print unto that purpose. And certainly what men so publish of their own accord, they can have no design to conceal from any; especially not from them wh.

usually attended on their ministry, who are most likely to read their books with diligence; but this hath been spoken unto before.

In these things we seek for no shelter nor countenance from what is pleaded by any concerning the obliging power of an 'erroneous conscience,' which the reverend author insists on, pp. 42—44. For we acknowledge no rule of conscience in these things which concern churches, their state, power, order, and worship, but divine revelation only; that is, the Scripture, the written word of God; and sure enough we are not deceived in the choice of our rule, so as that we desire no greater assurance in any concerns of religion. And by the Scripture as our rule we understand both the express words of it, and whatever may by just and lawful consequences be educed from them. This rule we attend unto, and inquire into the mind of God in it, with all the diligence we are able, and in the use of all the means that are usually and truly pleaded as necessary unto the attainment of a right understanding thereof. And if any one can inform us of any thing required of us thereby, which yet we have not received, we shall with all readiness comply therewithal. We have no prejudices, no outward temptations, that should bias our minds and inclinations unto those principles and practices on them, which we judge ourselves guided and directed unto by this rule; but all such considerations as might be taken from the most moderate desires, even of food and raiment, do lie against us. We are hereon fully satisfied, that we have attained that knowledge in the mind of God about these things, as will preserve us from evil or sin against him, from being hurtful or useless unto the rest of mankind, if we submit unto the light and conduct of it. Wherefore we seek no relief in, we plead no excuse from, the obligation of an erroneous conscience; but do abide by it that our consciences are rightly informed in these things; and then it is confessed on all hands, what is their power, and what their force to oblige us, with respect unto all human commands.

I know not of any farther concern that the nonconformists have in the discourse of this reverend author; unless it be in the considerations which he proposeth unto them, and the advice which he gives them in the close of it. I shall *only say concerning* the one and the other, that having

weighed them impartially unto the best of my understanding, I find not any thing in them, that should make it the duty of any man, to invent and constitute such a rule of church communion, as that which is proposed unto the nonconformists for their absolute compliance withal; nor any thing that should move the nonconformists unto such compliance, against the light of their consciences, and understanding in the mind of Christ; which alone are the things in debate between us. But if the design of the author, in the proposal of these considerations and the particulars of his advice, be that we should take heed to ourselves, that during these differences among us, we give no offence unto others, so far as it is possible, nor entertain severe thoughts in ourselves of them from whom we differ, we shall be glad that both he and we should be found in the due observance of such advice. One head of his advice I confess might be, if I am not mistaken, more acceptable with some of the nonconformists, if it had not come in the close of such a discourse as this is; and it is, that 'they should not be always complaining of their hardships and persecution;' p. 54. For they say, after so many of them have died in common gaols, so many have endured long imprisonments, not a few being at this day in the same durance; so many driven from their habitations into a wandering condition, to preserve for awhile the liberty of their persons; so many have been reduced unto want and penury, by the taking away of their goods; and from some the very instruments of their livelihood; after the prosecutions which have been against them in all courts of justice in this nation, on informations, indictments, and suits, to the great charge of all of them who are so persecuted, and ruin of some; after so many ministers and their families have been brought into the utmost outward straits which nature can subsist under; after all their perpetual fears and dangers wherewith they have been exercised and disquieted, they think it hard they should be complained of for complaining, by them who are at ease. It may be remembered what one speaks very gravely in the Comedian.

> Sed, Demea, hoc tu facito; cum animo cogites,
> Quam vos facillime agitis; quam estis maxume
> Potentes, dites, fortunati, nobiles;
> Tum maxume vos æquo animo æqua noscere
> Oportet, si vos vultis perhiberi probos.

Indeed, men who are encompassed with an affluence of all earthly enjoyments, and in the secure possession of the good things of this life, do not well understand what they say, when they speak of other men's sufferings. This I dare undertake for all the nonconformists; let others leave beating them, and they shall all leave complaining. She is thought but a curst mother who beats her child for crying, and will not cease beating until the child leaves crying, which it cannot do whilst it is continually beaten. Neither do I know that the nonconformists are 'always complaining of their sufferings;' nor what are their complaints that they make, nor to whom. Yea, I do suppose that all impartial men will judge that they have borne their sufferings with as much patience and silence, as any who have gone before them in the like state and condition. And they do hope, that men will not be angry with them, if they cry unto God for deliverance from those troubles which they judge they undergo for his sake. Thankful also they are unto God and men, for any release they have received from their sufferings; wherein their chief respect amongst men hitherto is unto the king himself. But that they should be very thankful to those who esteem all their past and present sufferings to be light, and do really endeavour to have them continued and increased (among whom I do not reckon this reverend author, for I do not know that I can truly do so), is not to be expected.

I shall add no more, but that whereas the nonconformists intended in this defence, are one, or do completely agree with the body of the people in this nation that are Protestants, or the church of England, in the entire doctrine of faith and obedience, in all the instances whereby it hath been publicly declared or established by law; which agreement in the unity of faith, is the principal foundation of all other union and agreement among Christians, and without which every other way or means of any such union or agreement is of no worth or value, and which if it be not impeached is in itself a sufficient bond of union, whatever other differences may arise among men, and ought to be so esteemed among all Christians: and whereas they are one with the same body of the people, that is, in its magistracy, and those who are under rule in one common interest for *the maintenance* and preservation of Protestant religion,

whereunto they are secured by a sense of their duty and safety; and without whose orderly and regular concurrence in all lawful ways and actings unto that end, it will not be so easily attained as some imagine; and whereas also they are one with them in all due legal subjection unto the same supreme power amongst us, and are equally ready with any sort of persons of their respective qualities or condition in the nation, to contribute their assistance unto the preservation of its peace and liberty; and whereas in their several capacities they are useful unto the public faith and trust of the nation, the maintenance and increase of the wealth and prosperity of it; considering what evidences there are of the will of God in the constitution of our natures under the conduct of conscience in immediate subordination unto himself, the different measures of light, knowledge, and understanding which he communicates unto men, as also of the spirit, rule, and will of Jesus Christ, with the example of the apostles and the primitive churches for mutual forbearance, in such different apprehensions of and practices about religion, as no way intrencheth on the unity of faith, or any good of public society; I cannot but judge (in which persuasion I now live, and shall shortly die) that all writings tending to exasperate and provoke the dissenting parties one against another, are at this day highly unseasonable; and all endeavours of what sort soever, to disquiet, discourage, trouble, punish, or distress such as dissent from the public rule, in the way before described, are contrary to the will of God, obstructive of the welfare of the nation, and dangerous unto the Protestant religion.

END OF VOL. XIX.

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